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PREFACE.

THE first half of this little work was the expansion of two Lectures originally delivered before young men in Exeter Hall and in Freemasons' Hall. The writer had no idea of the enlarged work receiving any extensive circulation; but, to his great surprise, it has reached a sale of nearly twelve thousand, and is still very much in demand. He has thought it would prove useful, and at least interesting to many, if he added several Lectures on Scripture references to the future, bearing more or less directly on the same interesting topic. He does not expect that every Christian will agree with him in every detail, or indeed see the importance, and, as he humbly thinks, the duty of studying prophecy, as a light shining in a dark place, to which we do well to take heed. But he has a right to expect that spiritual minds, agreeing with him in the great truths of our common Christianity, and desirous of seeing men's souls solemnized by a deep sense of the crisis in which we live, and

awakened to an appreciation of its responsibilities, should lay aside all "bitterness and wrath and evil speaking;" and while in print or otherwise pointing out defects, that they should do so in that meek spirit which disarms infidel opposition, and gives lustre and emphasis to Christian character. What the Holy Spirit has inspired in his word, it cannot be unbecoming in us to study and labour to elucidate. The Author does not think he has dogmatized or dictated in a self-sufficient spirit—at least, he never meant to do so. On vital evangelical truths he trusts he gives no uncertain sound; on unfulfilled prophecy he has tried, successfully he hopes, to speak and write as becomes one who is not a prophet, but a student of all prophecy inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore part of the rule of faith, and worthy of our prayerful study.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES,

&c.

I.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

On all sides it seems to be felt that ours is no ordinary age. It is universally owned that we live in times of infinite importance. Scene succeeds scene, change follows on change, and event thunders on event, with startling and portentous rapidity. Have these things a meaning? Is the age suggestive or significant? Are its facts and phenomena mere dumb and dead incidents, that rise like air-bubbles on the waves of time, and are resolved into the great element again without a mission or a meaning? Or, are they full of eloquent significance—pregnant lessons—successive acts in the great drama of time, fixing the epochs of the world? In short, are they "Signs of the Times?" There is no doubt that they are. The daily journals are witnesses on every side. Analogy dictates the inference that our age is significant; Scripture settles it. Ancient prophecies are every day trans-

lated into modern facts. The year 1854 reflects on every page the scenes sketched and foreshadowed upwards of 2000 years ago. God has invariably given signs and warnings in His word of every great and startling epoch of his past providential government; nay more, he has given precise dates, and definite numbers, and exact cycles. Now, what God has done premonitory of great events that have passed from prophecy into history, surely he has not wholly withheld in reference to those yet more stupendous ones that are predicted soon to come to pass. In the case of Noah, 120 years were definitely fixed as the period at the end of which the windows of heaven should pour down, and the fountains of the great deep should be broken up. This prophecy was the exact measure of the time. The duration of the captivity in Egypt was foretold to Abraham 430 years before, and published by Moses; and so exactly was the prophetic epoch fulfilled, that, in the language of the sacred historian, "At the end of 430 years, the selfsame day, it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Jeremiah is told that 70 years shall be the duration of the captivity in Babylon; and in Daniel we read that 40 years afterwards he ascertained from this passage the date of the exodus of the Jews from Babylon. The first advent of our blessed Lord was the subject of almost specific chronology. Long before it occurred Daniel said, "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be

cut off, but not for himself;" and his prophecy of the advent of the Messiah, and the specific period at which he should come, made so deep an impression upon the wide world, that not only the Baptist, Anna, and Simeon, believers in the word of God, and prayerful and patient expectants of its fulfilment, but, according to Tacitus and Virgil, the very heathen of that day, to a very wide extent, looked for an illustrious and sovereign personage then to appear on the earth. We may surely, therefore, expect, that the crowning act at the end of this dispensation, so frequently referred to, will not be left without premonitory signs and warning dates, unequivocal and emphatic. If signs and dates preceded the cross, surely signs and dates, scarcely less startling and splendid, may be expected to be given as preceding the glory. Jesus, indeed, says, "Of that day knoweth no man." I believe this refers especially to the generation and the time when that statement was made, and was then, the exact and literal fact. But, however ignorant that generation might be of precise and minute dates, he gives in that very chapter signs by which we may know when the things predicted are just at hand. The day and hour,—that is, the very instant,—none of us are likely to know; the significant and deepening foretokens of its approach Jesus has commanded us to learn, and pronounced their ignorance criminal who do not study, and thus ascertain, the times. The budding of the fig-tree is given by Jesus as one sign. The Jewish

race, set forth by the fig-tree, blasted at his first advent, shall begin to burst into blossom, and verdure, and beauty, as a premonitory signal of the near approach of his second. "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" was one of the earliest questions asked; and the answer then given just before the day of Pentecost was, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power." Evidently present duties, responsibilities, and privileges were to be their first and chief concern. But in the Epistle to the Thessalonians it is obvious, that since the day of Pentecost greater light must have been shed upon the epochs of prophetic chronology; for it is said, "Of the times and the seasons ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Thus the ignorance of yesterday is inexcusable to-day. The Lord rebuked the Jews of his day for estimating the character of to-morrow from the physical phenomena of to-day; whilst from the moral and significant signs that were showered down in all directions upon them, they refused to form any just induction of the nature and nearness of the approaching future.

Let us glance briefly at some of the prominent and well-known dates, by way of introduction, as an approximate evidence of our place in the world. There is one great date in prophecy, repeated in different formulas, but in all substantially the

same. We read of "time, times, and half a time;" or, 360 years, twice 360 years, and half of 360 years—making, when added up, 1260 years. We find the same date in another formula; as forty-two months, equal to 1260 prophetic days, or 1260 literal years. We find it again called 1260 days—*i. e.* prophetic days—or equal to 1260 literal years. These prophetic days represent each of them a year; just as in a plan or a map an inch, or quarter of an inch, is made to represent a mile. We have distinct authority for this. In Numbers xiv. 34,—"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years." In Ezekiel iv. 6,—"Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; I have appointed thee each day for a year." Thus prophecy contains its own plan — the measure of its own scale.

Now, this period of 1260 years, thus alluded to in Scripture, is employed in every instance to denote the duration of a great apostasy that should overcast all the horizon of the West, and last throughout a period called in one place 1260 years; in another, forty-two months; in another, "time, times, and half a time." You will see that this is referred to in the following passages:—In Daniel vii. 25: "He shall speak great swelling words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they" [that is, the saints of

the Most High] "shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time,"—or 1260 years. Again, in Rev. xi. 3: "I will give power unto my two witnesses," [true Christians,] "and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth"—that is, depressed—*i. e.* 1260 years. The "witnesses in sackcloth" of St. John's Apocalypse, are the "saints worn out," or persecuted by the same apostasy, referred to in Daniel, which is said to last 1260 years. I do not pause to identify this persecuting power with the Romish apostasy. This is almost universally accepted. The brands predicted in the prophecy are so fully developed by the Papacy, that dispute is barely possible. Indeed, the trouble to which mediæval monks and modern tractarians are put in getting rid of the almost universal interpretation is something wonderful.

Having seen the duration of this apostasy, let us try to take a step further,—When did it begin? It is of no use to know the end of its life, unless we can ascertain the date of its birth. We find that the Emperor Justinian gave the Pope, in the year 532, not only spiritual jurisdiction, but civil power; in other words, constituted the great papal organization a politico-ecclesiastical power, and armed it with authority to enforce by the sword its rescripts, its laws, and its pretended obligations. I therefore date the commencement of the papal power, as fully organized, from the year 532; and if so, 1260 years added to that would bring us

down to 1792, when history steps in to attest prophecy, and successive judgments begin to fall upon the Western Apostasy. Great convulsions then took place in every portion of Antichrist's dominions; all forces—infidel, political, and Christian—played against it; God's people began to emerge from the midst of it; and that part of the prophecy which still continues, came into its initial active operation,—"He shall consume it with the spirit of his mouth,"—while it is waiting to be utterly "destroyed by the brightness of his coming." From that era to this, the papal nations of Europe have been scourged, and Romanism wasted down to a shell, till it is rather a galvanized than a living thing. In France, it is a mere political tool; its hold on the great mass of the people is gone. In Italy, the higher priesthood is infidel. In Ireland, it is in its death-struggle. In England, its boasts, its glare and pretension, are signs of its exhaustion, not vitality. Just as the first wasting influences fell on the apostasy, the angel of the everlasting Gospel — that is, its various Missionary and Bible Societies, or, "the witnesses"—emerged from bondage, and were fully organized, with two previous exceptions, between 1793 and 1806.

I pass, in the next place, to another chronological date. The prophet Daniel specifies—and this relates to a subject which is now occupying men's attention in relation to the East—2300 years as the duration of the Mahometan power. The beginning of the 2300 years is dated by the most accomplished

and learned scholars in prophecy at about the year 430 before the birth of Christ, or the era of the noon-tide glory of the Persian empire, and the splendid progress of Xerxes, the era of its culminating and meridian grandeur. From that date Daniel looks along the centuries to the epoch of its initial decay, and predicts that 2300 years from that date its decadence would begin. This lands us in the year A.D. 1820, when what is called in the Apocalypse the drying up of the river Euphrates, or the decaying or wasting away of the Mahometan power, should begin to take place.* Now, if this calculation be correct, we should expect that in the year 1820, or thereabout, the Mahometan power did begin to waste and wane. What are the facts? In the year 1820, the "Annual Register" states, "The Ottoman empire had reached its meridian strength, free from all foreign invasion, and in possession of perfect peace." What takes place soon after this? In the summer of that very year Ali Pacha revolted against the Sultan. In the autumn of 1820 the Greek insurrection broke out. Soon after, Northern Greece, the isles of the Egean Sea, and the Danubian provinces, all revolted from the Turkish empire. In the Morea, the Greeks destroyed an army of 30,000 Turks. In 1827, the combined fleets of Britain, France, and Russia destroyed the Turco-Egyptian fleets at the battle of

* I noticed that at the May meetings in 1854, noblemen and gentlemen, not professedly students of prophecy, referred to the Euphrates as the symbol of the Turkish power.

Navarino. In the year 1828, Russia crossed the Balkan, entered Adrianople, and Constantinople was saved by the interposition of the Western ambassadors. Servia, Wallachia, and Moldavia are at this moment held by the Russians. The Turkish province of Algiers is now a French colony. Turkey suicidally extinguished the Janizaries, her best troops. During the same period earthquakes, plagues, and pestilences have almost depopulated Bagdad, Mecca, and Medina. And the Rev. Mr. Walsh, the British Consul at Constantinople, writing in 1831, says, "Within the last twenty years, Constantinople lost more than half its population. Two conflagrations happened while I was at Constantinople, and destroyed 15,000 houses. The silent operation of the plague is continually active. It is no exaggeration to say, that within the period mentioned, 300,000 have been prematurely swept away in this one city of Europe, by causes not operating in any other capital whatever." See how exact is the fulfilment of prophecy. These points I will state at greater length in my second Lecture.

The special prediction under the Sixth Vial is the drying up of the river Euphrates; that is, a progressive evaporation of Mahometanism, beginning in 1820, and expected by every student of prophecy to end in a very short time indeed. It is, you will observe, to die out: it is not to be struck down. It is the evaporation of a stream, not the destruction of a citadel at a blow. But

while this power wastes and withers, it does not follow that the Russian Eagle is to have the Mosque of St. Sophia for his eyrie. The Turks may not cease to be, when they cease to be Mahometans. They may become Christians. The 9,000,000 of Eastern Christians that are under the Crescent, and subject to all its insults, its oppression, and its tyranny, may rise up a glorious nation — a mighty dynasty — a nobler obstruction to Russian ambition than the decrepit and dying Turkish empire, which Western nations vainly try to keep up.

Turkey, just at the period predicted in prophecy, began to die out, as we have already seen. The evidence of this is recent testimony respecting her. Lamartine, in one of those sagacious aphorisms by which his eloquence is distinguished, says, "Turkey dies for want of Turks." This gradual decay of the Turkish empire identifies the period in which we now are with what is called in the Apocalypse the Sixth Vial. Mr. Habershon, in his excellent work upon the subject, calculated, in 1830, that the Turkish empire would cease to exist soon after 1849. He was not very far wrong. Its end is at hand. Every day I expect to hear of its stream dried up, of the Crescent waning, and of Turkey as a nation that was — not a nation mighty, and longer able to maintain itself. Plague, famine, pestilence, profligacy, are fast drying up her empire; her exchequer is now all but bankrupt; her momentary success against Russia is no earn-

est of her ultimate security. Britain and France, like clouds, may spread over the Euphrates, and try to prevent the evaporation of its waters; but all in vain. The ruthless Czar has his stern mission, and we our duty under all circumstances. The echoes of victory by the fleets of the ambitious Autocrat, and the cruel destruction of the Turkish, are now resounding through Europe. This gradual decay of the Crescent, after the period predicted under the Sixth Vial, which commenced in 1820, when the great river Euphrates began to be dried up, is assuredly taking place. Its final destruction may be looked for every day, as it has been since 1850; and now Russia, like a gigantic vulture poised in mid-heaven on outstretched wings, waits for the moment to descend and to destroy. Peace or war equally exhausts Turkey. Help her (and it is duty to aid the oppressed), and you may soften her fall, but you will not avert her decay. The time for blotting out Mahometan Turkey from the map is at our doors. The "sure word of prophecy" is stronger than the combined fleets of England and France, should they try, what they do not, to prevent the waning of the Crescent. We watch at this moment for the issue; and I confess, while I dread and deprecate, and justify every effort to obstruct the cruel ascendency of the Russian, I long to see the expiring throes of an empire that has long oppressed the free and crushed the good; to hear the last boom of Mahometan cannon; and to see the wide-spread

lands around Constantinople, so beautiful and so fertile, emerge from the deluge of Mahometan superstition, and not Russia, but protestant Christianity ascendant as the result, and thereby the way prepared for the march of the kings of the East to their beloved Palestine, the land of their fathers, their destiny, and their race.

Having seen that in all probability we must now be near that epoch, let me notice, in the next place, that as soon as the Crescent wanes, and the great river Euphrates, the recognised symbol of the Turkish power, evaporates, we may expect to see a preparation for the return of the kings of the East; that is, an awakening take place among the Jews, previous to their emerging from the lands of their captivity, and their moving homewards to Jerusalem,—an exodus more majestic than that from Egypt,—to take possession of the country that is theirs, though kept from them by the kings, and rulers, and princes of the earth. Here every sign is most striking. In all directions the Jews are awakening to a sense of nationality. They have newspapers—I read one of them every week—conducted with great talent and power—schools—power—influence. They begin to stand out as they never did before. They were always insulated, but it was rather as broken and fragmental units; now they begin to be insulated in their nationality, or as a nation, and to consolidate their power and make ready for their mission. I may state, from their own newspaper, that they are organising

plans for repossessing Palestine. Many of them have gone out as farmers and agriculturists; and in this Jewish newspaper I read the reports of the agriculturist Jews in Palestine, addressed to their brethren at home, just as you might read the account of the spies of old, when they told the children of the desert of the riches and the glories of the promised land. In America, funds are at this moment being raised, and near a million dollars secured, for building the Temple of Jerusalem; the dry bones in ten thousand valleys give tokens of returning life; the springs of Palestine have suddenly become full of fresh and refreshing water; every branch of the fig-tree buds; and more Jews have been converted, according to Tholuck, during the last eighteen years, than during the previous eighteen hundred; and there are more Jews at this moment in Jerusalem than there have been during the last seventeen centuries. A deeper interest, too, is now felt in the spiritual welfare of the Jews than ever was felt before; and the various societies for their conversion, not fifty years old, have been blessed with great and growing success, and are now the most prosperous of any. In the case of the Church of England I believe it is so, and in the Jewish mission of the Church of Scotland I know that it is the fact.

And what is one of the great political questions of the day? Whether the Jews shall be admitted to legislative as well as municipal power. Whether

it be a duty to admit them, or the reverse, this is not the place to examine; but their seeking and our discussing it is a sign of the times, a proof of their national development, a symptom of their disquiet, a forelight of future results. I know the meaning of this. It is the Jew, a weary, wandering exile, seeking a rest for the sole of his foot; and when he has obtained a political place in the Constitution of England, as probably he will, he will still find that he has no rest, and his heart will yearn still, till his feet shall tread the consecrated streets in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the world's grey fathers, walked, and worshipped our God and their God. And it is very singular, I may observe, that the quarrel between Russia and Turkey took its origin about things in Jerusalem,—about shrines and altars,—about the sacred shrines where stupid monks, that have crucified afresh a living Christ, are fighting and quarrelling about the tomb of a dead Christ. The Jew feels he is not at home. He seeks a seat in the House of Commons, as Noah's dove sought a rest before the waters were dried up. His rest is in Palestine.

In the "Hebrew Observer," a newspaper conducted by Jews, and very hostile to Christianity, I found, a few weeks ago, a poem in which a Jew apparently applies to Mahometanism and to his own race the very phrases employed in our Apocalypse, and forms the same inferences respecting the speedy restoration of the Jews which I have

been endeavouring to gather, on ground he refuses to tread.*

"REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.

"Lift up your heads, ye pilgrim bands—
Hark! hear ye not the cry
Which sweeps across the desert sands,—
His voice, who heaven and earth commands?
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads! The Crescent wanes
In yonder Eastern sky;
Beneath whose beam Oppression reigns,—
Beneath whose beam Pollution stains:
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads! Euphrates' stream
Is spent,—its course is dry,—
The Prophet's vision is no dream,—
His burden is no idle theme:
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads, ye Eastern Kings!
Ask ye the reason why?
Who bore you erst on eagles' wings,
You to your land in triumph brings:
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads! The nations quake,
Who raised their horn on high;—
See how their ancient pillars shake,
While from a dream their monarchs wake!
Redemption draweth nigh!

* I have reason to believe, from subsequent and recent information, that these lines, though accepted by the Jewish newspaper, have a Gentile origin.

"Lift up your heads! The Moslem's fane
No more provokes a sigh;
Lo! Israel's Lion shakes his mane
I see Him stalk athwart the plain:
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads! for Canaan's soil
Is yours. Ye shall not buy.
Long has it yielded, as a spoil,
Its corn, its wine, its fruit, its oil:
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads! Your temple dome
Shall once more kiss the sky!
Jerusalem shall be your home,
From which her sons no more shall roam:
Redemption draweth nigh!

"Lift up your heads! Lift up your voice!
Ye heralds, quickly fly!
Bid Israel's exiled tribes rejoice;
Israel, the people of His choice;
Redemption draweth nigh!"

As if to indicate the effects of Russian ascendency in the East, and the probable way in which the Jews will be driven from their homes and toward their own land, we find in the "Hebrew Observer" the following eloquent article:—

"It seems to be the fate of Jews and Judaism, voluntarily or reluctantly, to be involved in every great question agitating the civilized world. Whether they boldly place themselves in the foreground, —brave danger, and plunge into the midst of peril; or hide themselves in the most secret recess, and sedulously avoid every contingency which could

compromise their safety, it is all the same; they cannot escape their fate. They are to stand prominent before the world; the eyes and attention of mankind are never to be withdrawn from them. Thus has destiny willed it, and the will of destiny must be fulfilled. A most striking exemplification of this is afforded by the Eastern question.

"That little spot on the map of the globe, called Palestine, had, after having changed masters as often as conquering hordes devastated Asia, at last passed into the hands of the Turks. The Osmanlis were at that time at the zenith of their power. Three quarters of the globe trembled at the din of their arms, whilst the semi-savages on the Scythian steppes had but succeeded in shaking off the yoke of the Tartars. Little was it then thought that within a few generations after the tables would be turned, that the despised power of the Muscovites would presume to dictate laws to the successors of the superb Soliman. Such, however, was the will of destiny. And what was the indirect cause of the warlike preparations now taking place in the West of Europe, and the shedding of blood equally staining the fertile plains on the Danube, and the bleak mountains of the Black Sea? Does the Czar profess a war of conquest? Is it that he wishes to transfer the seat of his government from the unwholesome marshes on the Neva to the salubrious tracts on the Golden Horn? No, not a single village, thus has he solemnly declared, will he sever from the dominions of the Porte. The indirect

cause of war proceeded from the land once inhabited by Israel,—from the land given to him as an inheritance for ever, and which is now trodden down by Gentiles. The land usurped by Mahometan, Greek, and Papist, like ill-gotten property in general, becomes to its holder a curse instead of blessing. Papist and Greek disputed rights which belonged to neither, therefore the anger of Him who had declared, "To thee and to thy seed I give this land for ever," was kindled. The dispute first became a source of humiliation to the Papist; subsequently one of great vexation, and possibly of great disaster to the Greek: and now a spark has gone forth from Palestine, which threatens to set the world on fire. Thus has reluctant Judaism been dragged on the foreground. But the Jews as a body, too, are deeply involved in the Eastern question.

"The two principal seats of Judaism since time immemorial, were on the Pyrenean peninsula and the plains of Sarmatia. The suicidal policy of Ferdinand the Catholic drove the majority of his Jewish subjects from the West to the East, where that shelter was afforded them by the Crescent, which the Cross denied them. The Turkish dominions became an asylum of the fugitives from Spain and Portugal. In Turkey myriads of them settled, multiplied, and took root. Again, the largest portion of what formed formerly the kingdom of Poland, which, together with the maritime provinces on the Baltic, contained the most numerous

Jewish population in the world, fell into the hand of Russia.

"And now the two monarchs in whose dominions the greatest part of the Jewish settlements find themselves, are at war; and should the King of the North prevail against the King of the South, then the mass of the Jews would be at the feet of the Czar; and what mercy would it have to expect when the butcher from the north draweth nigh? The treatment experienced by the Russian Jews at the hand of the Scythian Gog Magog, is an earnest and foretaste of that which would be the melancholy lot of those now enjoying the protection of the mild Abdul Medjid, should they have the misfortune of falling into his power. Nicholas rules his Jewish subjects with an iron rod. Mercy, upon the very admission of his admirers, is not an element of his character; and the Jews are guilty of a most heinous offence, — of an enormity of the blackest dye,— of a crime most unpardonable in a country the population of which looks up to its monarch as to a God; pays him Divine honours, and considers his decisions as infallible — the Jews of Russia are guilty of dissent from the opinions and the innermost convictions of the Czar. The Jews of Russia dare to differ from their monarch on points of religion, and to hold in abhorrence the idolatrous worship of a people that bow down before images, and in mockery of the Bible, though professing to believe in it, transgress its most sacred injunctions. This dissent, and nothing else, thus

we declare aloud and emphatically before the world, is the crime of the Jews in the eyes of the Emperor."

So Jews flee from Russia, and find rest in Palestine.

"It is true that this is not the pretext under which they are oppressed, — crushed, — ground down, and trampled under foot. It is true that this is not the plea which is set up in justification of the Pharaonic cruelties daily inflicted upon them, and under which thousands of families are driven away from their native homes, where the ashes of their ancestors repose, where the houses of worship are reared in which they and their forefathers used to pray, where they drew the first breath of life, where the child, the youth, the man and woman, found a play-ground, a scene for sport, and a peaceful dwelling, and to which they are attached by the most hallowed associations and most endearing ties, in order to drag on a miserable existence in some strange and dreary place, where they are totally unknown, in most cases hateful intruders, and utterly deprived of the means of obtaining a livelihood. Nicholas may disclaim Asiatic barbarism, may pride himself upon the semblance of civilization, diffused over the surface of Russian society; but, surely, the wholesale transportation of masses of the population is nothing less than the worst characteristic of that semi-civilization, which unites the vices

both of refinement and barbarism. The wholesale transportation of masses of the population is a feat performed by such unstable powers as those of Assyria and Babylonia. The insane Nebuchadnezzar might be guilty of such an enormity as carrying away the population of a whole country, but the sagacious Napoleon never resorted to an expedient which can only be adopted by an individual who laughs to scorn the most sacred rights of man, who is utterly indifferent to the appalling misery and agonising horrors inflicted at his behest. It is true, this is not the charge brought against the Jews in justification of the gross violation, on the part of the Emperor, of the most sensitive feelings, and of the most sacred and warmest affections, which the Creator implanted in the human breast. . . .

"But, alas! we argue amidst a constitutional people, wont to discuss and base its laws upon historical and rational foundations. We have no hope whatever that our voice will reach the Muscovite despot, or that our arguments will produce any impression upon his self-will. We write to give vent to our feelings; we write to place the most melancholy position of our unfortunate brethren in its proper light; and lastly, we write to show how deeply interested we, as Jews, are in the struggle now agitating the East, and that if as Englishmen it be our duty to assist in carrying out the line of policy now pursued by the Western Powers — as Jews we should strain every nerve to prevent Russia from extending her influence still

wider, and from thus preparing for our Eastern brethren the same trammels which now chain those whom an inscrutable Providence has placed under the yoke of the despot in the North."

During the action of the Sixth Vial, while the stream of the Euphrates evaporates, and the Jews are rising and beginning to seek the land of their fathers, three unclean spirits, like frogs, go out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet — spirits of devils, working miracles. All of them go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of Armageddon, the great day of Almighty God. I may observe that these spirits have gone forth since the year 1820, when the Mahometan power began to wane, to deceive the nations. What are these unclean spirits? We understand their nature from their origin. The first is from the dragon — the Infidel spirit, which is now commonly called Secularism. The second is from the wild beast of the abyss, which (I need not explain to you) is evidently Romanism. The third, from the false prophet, that looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon, is the spirit of Priesthood, called, rudely, Puseyism, and, courteously, Tractarianism. I appeal to every reader, if the last ten years do not afford irresistible evidence of the action of these unclean spirits.

In Germany, in France, and even in England and America, and in every part of the globe, the

Infidel spirit, in various disguises, is actively at work. I do not pause to adduce the evidence. Much of the revolutionary spirit in Italy and in Austria is really infidel. It is a reaction from the revolting superstition and despotism by which they were crushed. The Romish spirit, again, so justly represented by the unclean frog, has been croaking over the length and breadth of our country, and, indeed, over Christendom, making proselytes in every rank, swelling its battalions only for its more terrific overthrow, and finishing its triumphs by the marvellous blunder of 1850, when it snatched at a gem in the diadem of England's crown, and lost its best footing; and the Pope dreamed, in his folly, that the Romish pulse at a well-known western bishop's wrist was the beat in the heart of Old England. The third unclean spirit is clearly shown by Mr. Elliot to be what I have called Tractarianism, or the recent Anglican assumption of priestly power. This is in many quarters the predominant spirit of the age. And what is its character? It is Popery, minus Pio Nino. It has all the apostasy, without the honesty of them that subscribe to the Canons of Trent. The minister is merged in the priest—the glory of the Master in the pretensions of the messenger—personal worth in official claims—the glory in the altar—and men's souls are bowed down by ceremony, instead of their hearts being captivated by love. In the New Testament, ministers of the Gospel are called ambassadors. In this system they are priests. If a

man be an ambassador, he cannot, by the very necessity of the thing, be a priest. A priest is one who carries my cause to God, and deals for me with God; an ambassador is one that brings God's mind to me, and deals with me from God. If, therefore, a minister be a priest, he cannot be an ambassador; if he be an ambassador, he cannot be a priest. Let Dr. Pusey take which horn of the dilemma he pleases; impaled on one or the other he must be, and there he must remain miserably perched, until he fully renounces or fully accepts his error.*

Now, these unclean spirits, whose names and nature I have briefly touched upon, are at this moment inspiring the kings and princes and rulers of the earth, secular and ecclesiastical, having emerged under the Sixth Vial, but continuing under the seventh. Russia, driven on from the East—Turkey, roused against her will—the Czar and the Sultan in mortal conflict—France and England, in spite of skilful diplomacy, precipitating the conflict they dread and cannot avert—Austria and Prussia standing by, vainly attempting neutrality—are the shadows of coming events, the tokens of a terrible inspiration. New dispositions may stave off or arrest for a day; but the urging force of the stream is too strong, and the venomous

* In a recent leading article of the *Times*, it was stated that Dr. Cumming regards the Bishop of Oxford as "the son of perdition." I hold the Pope to be the wearer of this brand, and the Tractarians to have "the mark" of Antichrist,

spirits that impel it too active and powerful, to be permanently and effectually repressed. Their influence is extended to, and in action under, the last — called, in the Apocalypse, the Seventh Vial. These unclean spirits come out under the sixth; they do not retire under it, however, but continue their action during the seventh; and it is during their action, under the pouring out of the seventh vial, that the last and greatest struggle takes place. Look across the sea, and behold what is now the condition of Europe. The nations are heaving to their centres — infidel, democratical, and priestly elements fermenting and generating, in the subterranean depths of society, those terrific elements which are destined to explode and shatter thrones, rend shrines, and overturn altars.

After the rise of the angel of the everlasting Gospel, which occurred at the end of the French Revolution, and was embodied in the various Bible and Missionary Societies that then arose in brilliant and beneficent succession, another angel is seen to spread his pinion, and to proclaim war against the errors of Babylon. This was fulfilled in the various Protestant societies, and especially in that earnest and universal protest that still sounds from thousands of pulpits and platforms throughout the land. These shall grow louder as Babylon grows feebler, and finally mingle with her knell.*

* I look on the Society for Irish Church Missions, and the Protestant Reformation Society's Special Mission to Romanists in England, as the two Societies having the most pressing and peculiar claims on the age.

I now proceed to infer the place we occupy in the current of the years, by comparing ancient predictions of future scenes and events, with present and obvious facts. It is during the closing days of this dispensation that a remarkable prophecy in Daniel comes to be fulfilled. By the evidences of the fulfilment of this prophecy we shall be able to ascertain our position: "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Could I give a more succinct and impressive description of the age in which we live? During the last seventeen years there has been more speedy, frequent, and extended travelling, than during the seventeen hundred years before. The stationary habits of former generations have been utterly broken. The numbers that move on the iron rail have baffled all anticipation; an enormous net-work of iron has overspread east, west, north, and south, by which five hundred people at a time are taken from capital to capital, with all the speed, accuracy, and precision of a weaver's shuttle. The gold discoveries in Australia and California, the mere surface of which we have only yet touched, have covered the ocean with gigantic steamers, till the surface of the sea is as populous as the surface of the land. The antipodes are now reached from London as soon as the Hebrides used to be; and, as in the instance of Panama, continents are severed and intersected, in order to remove obstructions and impediments to the advancing march of men. Apart from the impetus given to travelling, the prodigious influx

of gold (and I am told that only the other day a million arrived in this great capital) no longer makes the Apocalyptic statement a poetical extravagance, but the literal possibility of the day: "And the streets of the city were pure gold." And whilst there shall be this travelling to and fro, it is added, "Knowledge shall be increased." In all directions this is taking place. Everybody is seen prying into every department of nature, art, antiquities, history, and science. An insatiable curiosity has seized every mind—a thirst for information has come upon every rank. Long-buried secrets are stepping forth from their hiding-places, at the bidding of men who refuse to be disappointed. Nineveh has arisen from the dead, to tell mankind what the Bible has been telling ceaselessly, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Polar realms are explored; the secrets of the iceberg and the tenantry of the frozen zone are brought to light; and the attempt of a thousand years — in pursuit of which the gallant Franklin and countless brave seamen have perished — the North-west Passage, has at length been achieved; and the North Pole will probably be as clearly revealed in a few years as the Equator is now. Medical science has attained wondrous progress since Jesus, who consecrated it by his example, lived and healed, and suffered and died. Those formidable epidemics, the offspring of our sin as much as the judgment of God, are more thoroughly understood; and I do not see why

the pestilence which we call typhus, or the other pestilence we call fever, or the other we call cholera, or the last and worst endemic, rather than epidemic, we call consumption, may not, by God's blessing, be as much mitigated as a recent pestilence, more destructive than any of them, known by the name of small-pox. We see in all these things predicted progress in knowledge. And that wonderful anæsthetic agent, chloroform, which is a very recent discovery, has mitigated the primal curse pronounced on one half the human family, and rendered the terrible operation of the surgeon's knife scarcely perceptible to the subject of it.

During the last days, it is stated, as another fact and feature, that "the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached among all nations for a witness." Now, is not this a distinguishing sign of the age? China, the impregnable fortress of inveterate superstition, has lifted up its everlasting gates, and partly without and partly with our teaching, the truths of the King of Glory have entered, and the glorious sound of the Gospel may be now heard reverberating in the streets of Pekin; and our country, true to its responsibility, is pouring Bibles and missionaries into it. The proposal of the excellent Mr. James, of Birmingham, to send a million Chinese Testaments into China, has been taken up, and more than the expense is now provided. In all probability, a half million of Old Testaments will be added. The tribes that cluster around the North Pole, whose home is the region

of perpetual snow, have been sought out for so many years apparently to gratify curiosity, but really to complete the fulfilment of the prophecy: "This gospel shall be preached as a witness among all nations." The Moslem, the Hindoo, and the Chinaman, are emerging into the everlasting light. In every tongue on earth the Gospel has its music and its glad echo. In every latitude and longitude the cross is revealed, obstructing walls are falling; and where Christianity may not be accepted as a remedy, it is everywhere heard as a witness, and is, therefore, according to the words of our Lord, a precursor of the end.

Another symptom of the close of this age is now patent, the great boasting of the Romish Babylon. Never did the Church of Rome boast louder than she does now. She saith in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow." This is dotage, not power. Her last day shall be her proudest, her dying resistance will be the greatest. She will go down, as sure as there is truth in prophecy; but like a ship at sea, every sail set, and her prophecies of supremacy lifted up loudest and most impudent to the end. She has crushed every attempt within to rectify her errors and reform her corruptions; she has persecuted with the sword and fagot every exertion from without to awaken her to a sense of apostasy; her pride has grown with her years; her pretensions are, in the year 1854, louder than in the palmy days of Hildebrand himself. But her imperial splendour shall be her funeral pall; her

present glory shall soon only light her to her grave.

At this very period, immediately before the destruction of the Crescent in the East and of the Tiara in the West, we read in Old and New Testament prophecy, there will be a general war over the length and breadth of Europe; the unclean spirits preparing the kings of the earth for the great battle, or rather war, as the Scripture calls it, of God Almighty. Many and terrible are the signs of the fulfilment. The revolutionary fires that are smouldering under every throne will one day burst out; and every capital in Europe shall blaze, every village become a camp, and every country a battle-field. Assembled kings shall debate their very existence in the high places of the earth, and kingdom dash against kingdom, like stars broken loose from their orbits; and rulers fall from their high places, like leaves or unripe fruit from the fig-tree, when shaken by fierce winds. Every acre of Europe is covered at this hour with strange and ominous shadows, which coming events cast before. Auguries of looming evils have found access to cabinets and councils; and statesmen at their wits' end look pale and perplexed, while their hearts tremble for fear of the things that are coming on the earth. 1848 was a great sea-wave, rising and reaching far up the shores of Europe, and then receding, but only to gather fresh volume, and to come up again augmented in mass, and with accumulated speed, to burst over the lowliest hearth-

stone and the loftiest roof-tree, convulsing all things, wasting many, yet sweeping away the corrupting drift-weed of centuries, and destined, we believe, in the purposes of God, to baptize rather than overwhelm and bury the earth.

Another remarkable sign of the times, and, in its place, significant of our impression of the nearness of the end of the age, is the intensity that is concentrated in almost every sphere and department of life. The object may be great, or the pursuit may be in itself worthless; but everywhere you perceive that energy, and vigour, and great force are in it. Let it be the manufacture of a pin, or the enlightenment of a soul, — let it be the service of a master behind the counter, or of our gracious Queen in the cabinet,—there is condensed in it evident, and palpable, and untiring energy. For evil or for good, the age of apathy is gone. Men are in earnest in all they do; they are doing what they undertake with all their might. All seem to feel as if the time for their mission were preternaturally short, and the force they have extremely inadequate, and the night of time, or the night of death, too near to allow of respite from their toils, or a relaxation of their energies.

What is Tractarianism but old High Churchism in earnest? Ignorant of vital and evangelical truth, it is occupied about robes, and candles, and genuflexions, and crosses, and phylacteries. Better however earnest anything than dead everything.

We pray that their earnestness may be directed by the Spirit of God to objects worthy of it!

This intensity is a prophetic instinct, a sign of the times, an omen of the retiring sun and the gathering darkness, the termination of the groans of humanity, the travail of nature, and the winding up of a drama of which angels have been for six thousand years the spectators, and men the solemn actors. If this be a sign of the times, and the character of the men of this world, let us Christians excel, not fall behind them. "Work while it is called To-day." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The warning cry is ringing loud and clear from every quarter of the compass—"The Bridegroom cometh!" Are our lamps burning? Are our loins girt? Are our hands in the shop, in the counting-house, the senate, but our hearts, and our hopes, and our treasure in heaven, where Christ is, and from whence we look for the Lord?

Another very pregnant and remarkable sign of the times, and peculiarly suggestive, is the disintegration and disorganization of all things. Where reformation is refused, revolution begins. Whether there be or be not the hope of improvement, there is all but a universal determination to have change. Age is no defence; past services to generations gathered to their rest is no apology. Some who were in former days the strenuous champions of things that be, have now become the earnest advocates of new creations. Some may be factious,

others restless, but all seem to be unanimous in their desire to alter the existing economy. This is a feature of the day — a sign of the times. And what means it? It is the disorganization of the old, that is ready to pass away, preparatory to the emergence from beneath the horizon of a new and more glorious order of things, which God has promised, and man vainly expects he can himself create. In chemistry and in the moral arrangements of the world, the disintegration of existing combinations is always preparatory to new and frequently more beautiful revelations of the glory of the Maker, and the beauty of the things He has made. Chaos grew into genesis six thousand years ago. The fall will issue in the regeneration and restoration of all things. Designedly or undesignedly, we are breaking up the present, in order to make way for the construction of the future; and the speed, and energy, and universal consent with which we enter on the work, is one of the signs that the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness is at our doors, and that presentiments, which are prophecies, are within us. The solemn prophecy of Ezekiel seems the very type and spirit of the age:—"I will overturn, overturn, overturn; and it shall be no more, until He shall come whose right it is." "Thus saith the Lord, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill

this house with my glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

Another sign of the close of this dispensation is one that is exciting disputes and suggesting difficulties among many — the expectation of supernatural, or rather infra-natural manifestations of the wicked one. I cannot shut my eyes to the predictions of Scripture as to the character of the last days. Feats above the level of the human are ascribed to the Antichrist—assumed and exercised by the Church of Rome — and in intenser degree, and with yet more appalling emphasis, will in all probability be displayed, before Rome sinks into the fiery gulf, and Antichrist is destroyed by the brightness of the Redeemer's advent. Let us hear such predictions as these: (2 Thess. ii. 9)—"Whose coming is after (or according to) the working (or energy) of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." The phrase, "lying wonders," does not here mean lying miracles, but miracles that profess to prove what is a lie. Now, the Church of Rome is at the present moment radiating miracles she calls so in all directions. Many of them, as given by Dr. Newman, are exceedingly absurd, and proofs of the Oratorian's wonderful credulity; but I am not sure that the priests of the Church of Rome have not done supernatural, or rather infra-natural deeds, above the reach of human power, by the inspiration and the aid of the wicked one. I remember one day,—and I related the circumstance once before, in a Lecture in

Exeter hall,—sitting in my study, when the servant came in, and said, "A strange-looking gentleman wants to see you." The gentleman was ushered in. The moment he appeared, I scanned him from top to toe, with all a Scotchman's penetration and watchfulness. As I looked at him, I saw that he had a hat, which he politely took off, so broad that it would have been an admirable parasol in sunshine, and a splendid umbrella in a heavy shower. I noticed that he had a dingy cloak all over him, reaching down nearly to his very ankles, with a large cross, and a heart pierced by a dagger on his left breast, and written round it, "*Passio Jesu Christi Domini.*" I looked at his feet, but instead of seeing those very vulgar and secular things called boots or shoes, I noticed that he had no stockings and no shoes, and, instead, a sole of leather below each foot, each string coming between each toe, and all tied round his ankles; and the knot or bow, I think you call it, was so exquisitely tied, that, if he were not a monk, I should have said a lady must have tied it, for no man's fingers could have done it. Though I had seen him only once in my life before, in a railway carriage, I knew him at once, and said, "I believe I have the honour of addressing the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer?" (brother of the Earl Spencer.) He said, "That was my name; but my name now is Father Ignatius, the Passionist." I said, "I am very glad to see you." He said he had called upon Lord John Russell, and Dr. Hook, and Mr. Villiers,

I think, and many others; and, knowing I had a deep interest in the Roman Catholic question, he had come to me to make a grand proposition, which he had submitted to others. I said, "Let me hear it." He answered, "It is this; that you cease to preach any more against Popery on your side, and that we cease to preach any more against Protestantism on our side, and begin to pray for unity." I said to him, "Well, that seems very beautiful; but how can two walk together except they be agreed? I am preparing a Lecture for next Tuesday evening, the very title of which is, 'The Pope the Man of Sin:' now, how can you and I pull together?" I said, "Father Ignatius, I tell you what we can do. You can meet me at Exeter Hall an hour before the time; you shall explain for half-an-hour your plan; I will explain in half-an-hour my difficulties; then I will give you a quarter of an hour's correction of my blunders; and you can then listen to my Lecture." He said "he would be happy to come and avail himself of the opportunity," but refused to listen to my Lecture. He objected to controversy altogether. I said, "Will you let a clergyman of the Church of England begin with that beautiful collect, 'O God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid,' and the Lord's prayer?" He said, "No, certainly not; it is contrary to our convictions as Catholics to pray with those that are heretics: therefore we cannot pray together." "Well, Father," I said,

after an hour's conversation, "sometimes I am struck with the conviction that there is something in your Church above the level of the human. I see such devotedness in your priests — (and who can deny it?)—I see such sacrifices made by some —(and it is right that we should concede it)—I see in yourself, for instance, such sequestration to what I believe to be an awful and a miserable superstition — I see in you such untiring earnestness, that I sometimes begin to think, Father Ignatius, that your Church has something supernatural or infranatural about it." He paused, and, looking me in the face, said with great solemnity, "Dr. Cumming, if the Church of Rome be not the only Church of the living God, she is the master-piece of the devil; she can be nothing between." I said to him, "You will pardon me, but I solemnly believe your Church belongs to the second alternative you mentioned." He said, "It is what I expected; it is what I supposed; and, therefore, it does not at all surprise me." And we parted. I gave him a little book— a very small book — called, "Christ receiving Sinners." "Now," I said, "Father Ignatius, we may never meet again in this world; will you read this book? It has no eloquence; but it is a simple statement of the way of a sinner's acceptance with God, as I believe it to be true." He said, "I will take your book, but I won't promise to read it." "Well, then," I said, "if you won't read it, I will take the book back; I can find plenty that will read it." "Well," he said, "you have been so

courteous and kind, and have received me in such a pleasant manner, that for once I will promise to read the book." I entered his name on its title-page as a gift from me; and I have prayed — and prayer is the noblest controversial weapon we can employ — that it may please the Holy Spirit to bless it to that misguided, simple man, too simple to be the tool of the Vatican, so that he may come out of his prison-house, and testify, amid such a dense mass of listening immortals as that which meets in Exeter Hall, the glorious Gospel of God, in contrast with the soul-destroying superstitions and corruptions of Rome. I do not dwell upon this; I quote it merely to show that my conviction of the supernatural character of the Church of Rome is not peculiar to me. If Satan inspires the Papacy, he will enable it to do signs and wonders.

Some think that already Satan is manifesting supernatural agency, and doing feats that correspond to those predicted to occur in the last days of our dispensation. We must be on our guard against the secularism which excludes the supernatural altogether, and the superstition which sees supernatural feats everywhere.

Professor Newman represents the one class, Dr. Newman the other. But caution is not incredulity, and credulity is not Christianity.

Some excellent men allege that table-turning and table-speaking is a sign of the times, a proof of the presence of Satan and of the occurrence of infra-natural miracles. Now, I think I am competent

to speak on this subject; it is not an impertinent pretence to say so. I cannot agree with some, who denounce its claims to be supernatural as *primâ facie* false, because impossible; nor can I agree with those who have arrived at the conclusion that it is a manifestation of Satanic power, or direct communication with disembodied spirits, or in any sense a superhuman thing. I was asked to go and visit two of the most able and effective performers upon tables in the house of a dear and valued friend, a member of my congregation. I watched, suspiciously, the whole from beginning to end. It is important, however, to discriminate two things confounded. There is table-moving, which is one thing; there is table-speaking, or disembodied spirits speaking through tables (as it is alleged), which is a totally different thing. The one may be a scientific phenomenon; the other I shall try to describe as I think it deserves. It may seem presumptuous to say, even with deepest deference, that I am satisfied that Faraday in his letter does not explain the phenomenon. This may be my error, but it is my impression. Whether it be by electricity, or galvanism, or mesmerism, or any other yet undetected motive and subtle element, it is a fact, that the fingers of a lady laid lightly on a heavy table, made it, in my presence, spin round, lift its legs, stamp the floor, and throw itself into most extraordinary and unbecoming convulsions. Table-turning, however, is an amusement for children. Table-talking is not so. The one is

child's-play, the other is either downright nonsense or worse. It is important that we should understand, if possible, what pretends to be above human; for while expecting miracles, and signs supernatural, or rather infra-natural, in the last days, we must be on our guard against imposture, and prepare to decide what are, and what are not so. My friends asserted in their drawing-room, not only that this new motive power was true (which may or may not be), but that there was something above and beyond table-moving in it, or the supernatural. It may be electricity, it may be galvanism, it may be neither; or it may be some other natural influence which we do not, at present, know of; or it may be what Faraday suggests. I am aware there are difficulties in supposing the existence in human fingers of an undetected power, for how does it happen that when people sit down to dine, and lay their fingers on the table, it does not begin to dance? But it is a fact that I saw a table, touched lightly by the fingers of a lady, whose muscular powers, I am sure, were not very formidable, rise, leap, and move from side to side in the most extraordinary manner. Faraday I think does not, and I cannot explain this. But it is not therefore supernatural. My two friends, however, said that it was supernatural. They set the table in motion, and then asked me to put questions to the supposed spirit, which had just taken possession of the table. I said, "No, I decline to do so; I am here simply as a spectator, and have reasons for

declining, which I need not state. I am here simply as an inquirer: you begin, and I will look on." The question was asked, "Do you know the Rev. Mr. Reeve?" The table gave three gentle taps, which means in the table vernacular, "Yes." "Do you know the Rev. Mr. Fisk?" The table gave three gentle raps, in precisely the same manner. After asking two or three questions about various persons, present or absent, and receiving similar polite and courteous replies, my friends asked the supposed spirit, "Do you know Dr. Cumming?" The table positively forgot all the respect due to a lady's drawing-room, and threw itself into a state of convulsive kicking, which made me anxious, not about my creed, but about the table's safety. My friends then asked how many shillings were in my pocket. It guessed eleven, and there were only five. They then asked how many sovereigns I had. It guessed five, and I had only one. It was then asked, "Will you answer Dr. Cumming at all?" The answer, according to their interpretation, was "No," in the most decided manner. "Why not?" An alphabet was then laid on the table, and, certainly, the proceeding was very curious. We began: A, the table stood still; B, it gave three taps. That was set down as the first letter of the answer. We then began again: A, the table was silent; B, still silent. We went on till we came to E, then there were three taps. This was proceeded with till the words were made out, — "Because he laughs."

When I heard this, I submitted that my laughing and incredulity ought to be a reason for convincing me, and not leaving me a sceptic. But the table, or if not the table its manipulator, seemed to dislike me excessively. I confess I saw much that was curious; a great deal ingeniously done; but I have also seen very remarkable things in the feats of tumblers in the streets of London, in the tricks of card-shufflers in a room, and in the conversaziones of ventriloquists in a chimney-nook. But I have seen nothing necessarily supernatural about it; and mark, if there be a doubt that a thing is a miracle, it is no miracle. In the days of our Lord there was no doubt expressed by bitter enemies that what he did was miraculous; the puzzle was, "Is it from the devil below, or is it from God above?" But table-talking is so equivocal, that the parties present witnessing the so-called miraculous responses, are puzzled to determine whether it be supernatural, or only very clever and talented. Now, in the last days, I look not for equivocal feats and dubious miracles, but for terrible startling manifestations of superhuman power, which shall deceive, if possible, the very elect.

But a word more on this subject. I have read on one side the pamphlets of the Rev. Mr. Close and the Rev. D. Wilson, who have written very ably and admirably; though I do not agree with either as to the grounds of their decision, yet I agree with their conclusions. I have read every pamphlet I could find on the other side, from that

of Mr. Dibdin, one of the best and most pious men in London, to those of Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Gillson, and others who have written in favour of their views; and in reading those various interesting works, I noticed that each inquirer of the table got all his answers very much in the direction of his own wishes and predilections. Let us mark well that fact. For instance: according to the Rev. R. W. Dibdin, demons enter into the table and tell lies, and declare that the worship of the Virgin Mary is right; that is, they are Jesuits, or Popish demons. According to Mr. Godfrey, it is the spirits of departed sinners that emerge from hell and confirm every doctrine of the Bible; that is, Protestant spirits. According to Owen, the infidel and Socialist, Voltaire, and Diderot, and D'Alembert, and Paine, all come down from eternal happiness, and tell him how perfectly happy they are, and have been, and expect to be! According to the Rev. Mr. Gillson, spirits speak against Popery; while, according to Mr. Dibdin, they praise it, as if they had been the priests of Dr. Wiseman. Now, I cannot believe that an evil spirit would speak the truth, or attest the inspiration of the Bible; for if a kingdom be divided against itself, how can it stand? I cannot, in the next place, believe that an evil spirit would be so stupid a blunderer as to preach the worship of the Virgin Mary to so sound and pious a Protestant as Mr. Dibdin. And I can never believe that godly, pious, and evangelical ministers, are the *media* by whom devils come from

hell, to tell lies or truths to mankind. Nor can I believe that "Alfred Brown," the name given by one spirit, could describe his torment, as recorded in the book of Mr. Godfrey; or that any other lost spirit ever can be, or is, suffered to come up to this world and tell the transactions of its awful prison-house, as long as I read the petition of the rich man and the decisive answer that was given him. "I pray thee, father, that thou wouldest send Lazarus unto my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. And Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets: if they hear not them, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Now mark you, if the Old Testament alone was sufficient eighteen hundred years ago to render unnecessary and impossible an apparition from the dead to attest its truth, the Old and New Testament together are, *à fortiori*, more than sufficient to render unnecessary, unexpected, impossible, untrue, an apparition of a spirit from the realms of the lost for the same object and mission. I expect supernatural deeds before this dispensation closes; but table-talking is not such proof of the manifestation of Satan as we are to look for. Besides, Satan has higher game to fly at; he is at present too busy in spreading German Rationalism, Tractarianism, Popery, Mormonism, and various kinds of moral evil, to have any disposable force and time to spare for such bungling manifestation as

table-talking. I admit that there is much in it as a physical phenomenon that is curious, much that I cannot explain; but I protest against the conclusion that, because I cannot explain a phenomenon, I am bound to attribute it to supernatural and miraculous agency. The only trace of the serpent's presence, if such it be at all, that I can discover in the matter, is, I confess, to me a very sad one. It is this: that the absurd excitement it has produced should make lunatics in America — that the monstrous thing should be organized into a church, as they call it, in Philadelphia — that a clergyman should advertise a Lecture on the theology of table-talk in the metropolis of the world; and that Christian ministers, of undoubted piety and talent, purity of life, and clearness of mind, should waste their influence and weaken their power, by publishing mediæval fancies, monkish nonsense, profane and anile fables.

Signs are predicted in the firmament, and these, too, are also multiplying. Every day's newspaper contains new and striking letters descriptive of astral phenomena, alike unexpected and remarkable. For the last three or four years we have heard of new planets, unexpected comets, brilliant auroras, lunar rainbows, and yet more brilliant and remarkable meteoric appearances. I am not superstitious, but I am not sceptical. I cannot help remembering that "signs and sights in the heavens" are the phenomena of the last days, and precede the appearance of the sign of the Son of Man.

Then, in the next place, the Seventh Vial, the last apocalyptic symbol of the judgments of God on earth, will be poured into the air. We read: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent. Now mark, this seventh vial was filled with the last plague; the word "plague" comes from the Greek πληγή, a stroke, and means pestilence and calamity of every sort. This last vial being poured into the air denotes the universality of its influence, whatever that influence may be. It will reach the loftiest throne; it will descend to the hovels of the poorest cotter, and make itself so felt that its sprinklings will be unmistakeable as the last terrible baptism of our world. Now, all these vials have a literal as well as a moral significance. The prophecy of a "star from the East," denoted figuratively the Messiah; but when Jesus was born, a literal star appeared. So this vial has

its physical and its moral meaning. This vial let fall its first sprinklings, I believe, in 1848; and its influence still spreads. From that day to this it has been on the fruits of the earth; from the vines of France, Spain, and Madeira, to the potato of Ireland —a universal and destructive blight. Where is its birth-place? Medical men tell you, in the air. In vain chemists analyse it; in vain microscopes are applied; in vain is it assigned to a peculiarity of soil, season, climate, insects. The only ultimate explanation is the apocalyptic taint, the contents of the angel's vial vitiating the air, the source of life and nutriment, with its terrible and poisonous miasma. The physical proof of the action of the seventh vial is thus complete. But its effects are not confined to vegetable life. Cholera, a new and devastating pestilence existing like other diseases since the fall, but first seen here in 1832, as a premonition, came down upon England in 1849; and ere it ceased, I recollect—for I was in the midst of it — three thousand per week were gathered to their graves. No theory explains this; no medical skill has penetrated its secret. Poverty, filth, bad drainage, crowded hovels, long hours in unventilated shops, do not create it; but they draw it down as iron conductors draw down the lightning; and then they nurse, and feed, and strengthen it, till it goes forth from the hovels of the poor to the halls of the great, conquering and to conquer, with terrible and disastrous success. It is a taint in the air, a poison of universal presence. It is diluted at present, and has been diluted since

1849, but it is not spent; it has come back with concentrated force in 1853; and I expect —and the expectation suggests prayer, as the pious man says; and sanitary movement, as the worldly man also rightly says—while I earnestly pray my expectation may be proved erroneous — that it will make 1854 one of the most deadly and fatal periods in the roll of the years of our country, written with weeping, and lamentation, and woe. I look at cholera less as the gift of God—more as a retribution for the sins and misdoings of mankind. We should learn to see God in the sunshine as well as in the cloud. After cholera has struck down twenty or thirty in St. Giles's, it acquires strength, and visits Belgrave-square; and we are grateful to God that it is so. It serves to teach the rich occupants, that the sun would shine as brightly on their mansions, if the shadows did not fall on such hovels near them — no class of society must insulate itself, or it must suffer. That poor ragged child in St. Giles's, mother, is thy child. That poor widow, in misery, wretchedness and hunger, lady of rank and title, is thy sister. Do you say, Am I my sister's keeper? Am I my brother's keeper? Cain's curse will be branded on your brow and Cain's doom and wretchedness will necessarily be yours. Medical men state, that during the last five or six years disease is less tractable than formerly, and that trivial ailments are more apt to end in fatal diseases. Earth by its sufferings thus responds to the word of God.

Facts of universal occurrence, phenomena startling the wide world, seem to assure us that this vial has been poured into the air, and that we are near the winding up of the age.

There was to be under this vial a great earthquake. I believe this, if of literal import, is yet to come; but that part of the Lord's prophecy of earthquakes in divers places has been literally fulfilled.* In England and on the Continent there have been several premonitory convulsions; and in distant countries whole cities have been engulfed during the year that is passed, and thousands of their inhabitants buried in the bowels of the earth; as if to show that the expansive gaseous forces are mustering their elements and giving instances of their force preparatory to the tremendous shock which rends the earth, upheaves capitals, and with a voice which shall sound in the depths of men's hearts, as if the hour of doom were approaching, proclaim an epochal hour. Every day I expect to hear the rending of the earth's crust, and the outburst of its subterranean, long pent-up elements, and with this a moral convulsion — for such an earthquake means in prophecy — that will shake society to its centre. It is absurd in wiseacres to answer, this is impossible. It is predicted. It is certain. All you can fairly question or dispute is the time, not the fact. If you will look at the daily papers of 1848, and read the descriptions

* While this is passing through the press, *The Times* calls attention to a terrible earthquake in Calabria.

they gave of the French Revolution that broke out in that year, the first throe of the earthquake as a moral convulsion, you will find that they commonly employ the word "earthquake," — "that unprecedented earthquake;" and, singularly enough, the language of the Apocalypse (it may be, never read by those who wrote these accounts) is their favourite figure: "that great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth." Believers in prophecy, and those who laugh at all revelation, are equally expectant of new and startling occurrences. One heave of this predicted convulsion has thrown down the walls of China, and revealed the sublime spectacle of some hundred millions of people emerging into the grey dawn of everlasting light.

Under this Seventh Vial, also, there is to be a great fall of hailstones, which seems to indicate an invasion from the north. The leading great hailstone is, in all probability, the Czar or Autocrat of all the Russias. That gigantic empire seems, from the slight and incidental reference to it in prophecy, destined to send down into the west and south of Europe, especially the Papal States, an overwhelming deluge of savage barbarians, as God's judgment on the guilty nations of Europe, leaving what was a paradise before, as a desert and wilderness of desolation behind. These awful events are gathering in the distant horizon. The stormy East will soon startle the quiet West, and the treasures of hail accumulating for years shall sweep society itself

before its desolating van. Russia is destined to play a mighty, and in all probability a terrible, yet not the less guilty part, in the last act of the world's drama; there are prophecies in Ezekiel pointedly referring to this portentous empire, to which I beg the reader's attention.

I dare not say, however, that every sign of the age is sorrowful and sad. I see tokens beautiful and big with promise; I can see strivings that indicate man's hopes and expectancy of a brightening day. The roll of prophecy is not all covered with lamentation, and weeping, and woe. I see, in the multiplied attempts to elevate the physical, moral, and social condition of mankind, results created by the conscious or unconscious anticipation of the age to come. What a beautiful type of the coming brotherhood of mankind is such an association as that of the "Young Men's Christian Association," having no basis but the Bible, no element but love, no password but Christ! What is the great temperance movement — prosecuted with an energy that never fails, losing daily its first rashness, yet nothing of its first zeal — but a prophetic effort to induce men soberly to weigh their responsibilities, and watch with calmness the rush of events as they sweep by, and so make ready for the coming of the Lord? What is the great social Sanitary movement but an evidence of man's conviction that this house of ours will one day be, what we would rejoice to see it now, swept and garnished, and prepared for the presence of the

Bride awaiting the advent of the Bridegroom? What is the recent extending love and study of Music, becoming every day as common as the study of reading and writing, but the tuning of the instruments preparatory to the anthem peal, "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth?" What are those rapidly accumulating discoveries' —science shortening distances, annihilating time, compressing nations into parishes, continents into neighbours, and oceans into lakes—but man's aspiration after the dominion which he held and lost in Paradise—prophecies of success not to be gained by him, but given according to the purposes and promises of God? With all this there is a restlessness abroad that one cannot mistake. There is a universal sense of dissatisfaction—a pervading consciousness that there is much wrong that needs to be put right—a dim recollection of departed perfection we have lost—a strong anticipation of the restoration of all things. How restless is man in every department! In Politics, to-day it is Despotism, to-morrow it is Democracy; one year a Republic, another year an Autocracy; but no more national happiness in the last than in the first. To-day, Whigs are in the ascendant; the next day, Tories are on the crest of the wave; next day, a coalition of both—some say, with the excellences of both; others, with the excellences of neither. Yet all this is dealing with the symptoms, without touching the inner seat of the fever of humanity.

In the Church, during one decade of years we

hear of nothing but the blessings of a Church Establishment, of endowment, of royal and aristocratic patronage; in another, it is the Voluntary system, popular election, the freedom of the Clergy, and the independence of the Church. One day, Ecclesiastical Synods are announced as hot-beds of agitation; another day, Convocations are implored and advocated, as the only salvation of the Church. Yet, if men had common sense, they would see that it is not new machinery that we want, but a new spirit to inspire the old machinery that we have.

If you look at Medicine, one day hydropathy carries all before it as an irresistible wave; the next day homœopathy, with its infinitesimal doses, cures all diseases; then mesmerism displaces both, and everybody rushes to be mesmerised: allopathy returns again, and continues till some new crotchet takes its place. It is not a new theory that is wanted, but the restoration of man's health, which is promised when the world shall close as the world began, in Paradise.

Turn to the Commercial world. In one year thousands are embarking their capital in railroads too Quixotic ever to be achieved; in the next, copper and lead mines are the grand attraction; on 'Change something else; while at present the gold in California and Australia absorbs all attention.

Man feels there is something wrong; he is conscious of inward fever: like the troubled sea, he

feels he cannot rest. Never was humanity so much at sea as at this moment. It nevertheless is a preparation for a new and sure *dénoûement;* it is Nature's unconscious cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" There comes, at times, a calm at sea, which sailors call breeding weather, at the end of which there rushes upon the ship an irresistible typhoon. The calm since 1848 is drawing to its close. The fierce hurricane, nursed in silence and in secrecy, begins to howl and whistle amid the national shrouds; and the straining and pitching of the ship tells surely its force is on her. Make all tight; stand every man at his post; lift every man his heart to the great sea Lord and land Lord of heaven and earth; and when the waves shall rise and threaten like wild beasts on every side, and the fierce wind shall come down upon us like an avalanche from the mountain tops, we will not be afraid: One is in the ark whom the winds and the waves obey; not one of the redeemed crew shall perish. The frenzied elements shall dash against the true Church as the terror-stricken rain flings itself in a winter night against the window-panes, imploring shelter rather than inflicting damage.

Under the Seventh Vial, great Babylon, you may remember, comes into remembrance before God. That is, he selects her for her final judgments. She is now at the beginning of her sorrows. The apparent triumphs and ostentatious boasts of Rome cannot conceal the fulfilment of the prophecy. She is withering down to her very roots

in every part of the earth; her real vigour and vitality are gone; she is more and more recognised as a detected imposture, and kept up as a piece of the pageantry of Europe, not as a power that makes nations stand in awe, or kings dread its opposition. In one country she is plundered; in another resisted; in another used as a tool; and detested and despised in all. Her greatest attempts at domination have ended in her very worst defeats. The spirit that was in her when Innocent III. was pope still animates her, but the people she has to deal with belong to another age; and there is a book in their hands that casts its glory upon her features, and reveals the awful image of the wicked one. Her strength is in secret; the throne of her power is not episcopal or cardinalatial, but the confessional. The moment she rises from being a secret underminer to take the place of an open assailant, she parts with half her strength; she is shorn of the hair in which her strength lies; and she will soon have to grind at the mill, a miserable and wretched drudge. This fatal mistake she has lately made in Holland, England, and Southern Germany. Her present politics are the sign of her dotage, the evening twilight of her day. "*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" She has been drinking of the cup of God's indignation bitterly since 1848; and she will drink of it more bitterly in the years to come. We may be chastened as a nation for our tampering with her; but our country, I gather

from prophecy, is, I think, safe for mighty purposes and for noble ends.

"Thou, too, sail on! O ship of state,
Sail on! O England, strong and great.
Humanity, with all its fears,
And all its hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate.
We know what Master laid thy keel;
What workmen wrought thy ribs of steel;
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope;
What anvils rang, what hammers beat;
In what a forge, and what a heat,
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope.
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the waves, not of the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale.
In spite of rock and tempests' roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on! nor fear to breast the sea;
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith, triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, are all with thee!"

Just before the Church of Rome perishes in a conflagration of righteous wrath, — on the eve of her doom, we read in Rev. xviii. a voice sounds from heaven like a beautiful strain, "Come out of her, my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and receive not of her plagues." Whenever, in the great Apocalyptic drama, a voice comes from above, there are heard at the era of its fulfilment the responding echoes from beneath. There is invariably a fact on earth announcing the fulfilment

of the word from heaven. This voice, "Come out of her, my people," has been heard in the communes of France, and among the green valleys of Languedoc, and increasing thousands of Frenchmen are responding in their own beautiful tongue, "Lord, we come, we come." The summons has been heard around the palace of the Grand Duke, and in the picture-galleries of Florence; and innumerable Madiais, in the face of cruel laws and imprisonment, and bondage and death, are answering with right joyous hearts, "We come, we come." Under the shadow of St. Peter's and near the Inquisition, where free thought is crime, and a word of truth or an act of charity an evidence of it,—above the silent catacombs of the ancient dead, and in the hearing of the sacerdotal hierarch who sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God, the heavenly summons breaks like sweet music from Italian skies, "Come out of her, my people;" and neither the thunder of the Vatican nor the anathema of its tyrant can repress the answering accents of increasing multitudes, "Blessed Jesus, we come, we come!" In England never was the Roman Catholic mind so accessible as it is at this moment. Vast numbers, from the premier Duke of England and Lord Beaumont down to the lowest inhabitant of St. Giles's, are emerging from Babylon under a new and blessed attraction. In the green fields of Old Ireland the joyous sound rings loud and clear, reverberating from spire to spire, "Come out of her, my people;" and tens of

thousands of that fine, but oppressed and injured race, are bursting their chains in every direction, casting their images and idols to the moles and the bats, lifting up their heads under the irrepressible belief that their redemption draweth nigh, and shouting, not saying, till Rome trembles as she hears it, "Lord Jesus, we come, we come!"

We are led from all signs to infer that the meeting-place of all the lines of God's providential work on earth is very near. Paganism is breaking up all over the East. Mahometanism is in its death struggle, in vain attempting to avert its waning. Popery is artificially propped up, and preparing to take its exodus to eternal night. The Ganges, the Euphrates, and the Tiber, are all gleaming with dawning glories of a nearing day. The Jordan, too, is not still; it heaves with the hopes and expectations of Judah. Life from the dead is reaching the hearts of buried nations, and they rise in rapid succession to their feet; they only wait for the order, "Unloose, and let go free." We stand on the margin of two ages; we hear the dying moan of one, and catch from afar the awakening anthem of the other. While all that is holy, beneficent, and true, is starting to its feet, all that is infidel, superstitious, and evil, under the prince of the power of the air, is mustering to battle. Satan puts forth gigantic energies — fraud, sophistry, cruelty, oppression! The imprisonment of the Madiai, and Miss Cunninghame, and others, is proof of what he would do if he could. The deadly

and mischievous errors he sows, like tares in a field, are proofs of his attempts to poison what he cannot persecute, to disturb what he is unable to destroy. The allies of Pio Nono and of Voltaire will yet coalesce against Christianity, in order to keep back a swelling tide of light and love, which sweeps them from an earth they have too long polluted by their presence.

In the midst of this let me add, the Church and the people of God are safe; they are enclosed in everlasting arms; the shield of Omnipotence is over them. They may pass through a sharp night, but it will be a short one. Oh, what a solemn position do we occupy if my conclusions be right! The shadows of 1854 fall back into one eternity and forward into another. We stand on an isthmus washed by the waves of time and wasted by the waters of eternity. The terrible silence of the age is the suspensive pause, when nations hold their breath before the shock comes. The sure and glorious termination alone reconciles us to its pressure. Into a holy, and happy, and blessed land the surf of the troubled present rolls; and our weary hearts will leap to that land as a babe leaps to its mother's bosom.

Are we among the saints of God? It is time to lay aside our ecclesiastical and sectarian quarrels. The very ground on which we stand will soon be calcined by the last fire, and the miserable Shibboleths which distract Christendom disappear in smoke. All society is rending into two great divi-

sions. By and by there will be no Jesuits, no Ultramontanes, no Franciscans, no Tractarians, but out-and-out Papists. By and by there will be no Churchmen, no Dissenters, but out-and-out Christians. All society is splitting into two great antagonistic masses: every man is taking his place; and those whom we call, in courtesy, Tractarians—who profess to hold the *via media*, neither going with us nor with the opposite side—will find themselves like men between two advancing armies, overwhelmed by the fire of both. I say, society is splitting into two great masses. To which do we belong? To Christ — that is, the Church of the living God; or to Antichrist — that is, the great Apostasy? Oh, let us not quarrel about lesser things! There is love enough on Calvary to lift the earth to heaven; there is light enough at Pentecost to irradiate the wide world; there is warmth enough on the hearthstone of our Father's house to make every heart glow with ecstasy and thankfulness! Let us rather quench than kindle the fires of passion. Let us pray that the temperature of our Christian life may be so raised, that we shall neither see nor feel the petty scintillations of angry quarrels.

> "Between us all let oceans roll;
> Yet still, from either beach
> The voice of blood shall reach,
> More audible than speech —
> 'We are one!"

It is very remarkable that all the great times and

dates of prophecy meet and mingle about the year 1864. I do not say that that year will be the close of this world. I do not prophesy; I do not foretell the future; I only forth tell what God has said; but I do feel, that if 1864 be not the close of the age that now is, and the commencement of a better one, it will be a time unprecedented since the beginning — portentous, startling, and terrible to the enemies of God; but glorious, holy, and full of joyous scenes to the people of God.

Clinton proves that the seventh millenary of the world begins in 1863. The Jews of ancient and modern times all look to the beginning of the seven thousand years for their *Sabbatismos*, or millennial rest. Is the end of the age so near? —

> "The groans of nature in this nether world,
> Which heaven has heard for ages, have an end
> Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung;
> The time of rest, the promised sabbath comes.
> Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
> Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
> Over a sinful world; and what remains
> Of this tempestuous state of human things
> Is merely as the working of a sea
> Before a calm that rocks itself to rest."

Thus all fingers point to this rapidly approaching crisis. All things indicate that the moment that we occupy is charged with intense and inexhaustible issues. Never was man so responsible! Never, in the prospect of what is coming on the earth, was man's position so solemn! But evil shall not gain the day. Truth and love will

emerge from every conflict, beautiful, and clothed with victory. The days of Infidelity and Popery are numbered. The waters of evil must soon ebb from the earth they have soiled. The approaching genesis will surpass in beauty and in glory the old. The Church of Christ will lay aside her soiled garments, her ashen raiment, and put on her bridal dress, her coronation robes; and the nations will look up to her in admiration, earnest as the waves of the ocean rise up to the bright full moon enthroned above them. The sunrise of approaching day will strike the earth, and awaken its long silent hymns, and clothe creation's barest branches with amaranthine blossoms. Poor Nature, that has so long moaned like a stricken creature to its God from its solitary lair, shall cease her groans and travail and expectancy; for God will wipe away her tears, and on her fair and beautiful and holy brow, crowned and kingdomed, other orbs in the sky, her handmaidens, will gaze in ecstasy and thankfulness and praise. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. And there shall be no night there. For these sayings are faithful and true."

II.

THE MOSLEM AND HIS END.

In introducing to the reader the Moslem and his fate, I do not pretend to prophesy, but simply to set forth what seems, on grounds of the very highest probability, to be the meaning of prophecy inspired by God, and written for our instruction. I do not attempt to *foretell;* all I presume is, to *forth tell* what is already predicted in the sacred volume. I am a humble interpreter of what God has written, not a prophet of what God will do. I speak to reasonable men; I ask attention, not submission.

The application of Scripture to the events of the day demands the utmost carefulness. We must take care to avoid that presumption, which sees the fulfilment of prophecy in things in no just respect the echoes of ancient predictions; and equally also that incredulity, or rather scepticism, which regards the word of God as in no degree applicable to the affairs of men. I believe history is a continuous fulfilment of prophecy; its facts the marks of Providence translating the written into the actual — ancient texts into modern annals. God inspired the prophet. He rules in the affairs of men, when all past utterances shall be seen embodied in present facts, and all history point back-

ward to its outline, laid down in Scripture long before its materials were found. Gibbon the sceptic, and Hume the atheist, and Alison the Christian, and Macaulay, and innumerable others, will appear, reluctantly or the reverse, the most emphatic witnesses to God in his word and in his world. Every day this result approaches us; more and more does Scripture shine forth in deepening lustre and beauty.

At the same time, it is important to remark, that, on the great truths of Christianity, all true Christians of every persuasion are at one; on the interpretation of prophecy, it is fair to state, they conscientiously differ. Yet, in this field there is a deepening agreement among most. Differ from me or any other Christian as such, on that which is vital and essential, and you so far denude yourselves of the claims of Christians; but should the reader differ from me on the interpretation of prophecy, and what appears to me most probable, I hope, in the spirit of brotherly love and of Christian charity, we shall forgive our differences in things confessedly difficult, and sometimes obscure, because of our harmony in magnificent and glorious things, which are so plain that a wayfaring man may not err therein.

The subject I propose to examine here is Turkey and Mahometanism, or the Moslem and his end. The subject is, in the present crisis of Europe, fraught with the intensest interest. It absorbs many thoughts: all eyes are directed to the sun-

rising. Every newspaper reflects on the West the startling lights that are breaking forth in the East. Every day's post is anxiously expected. The Crescent is occupying the thoughts, the hopes, the sympathies, and even provoking the sorrows and the griefs of the best, the most civilized and Christian of the human family. The Koran has played so startling a part in the great drama of the past, that we naturally and anxiously inquire what place it is to occupy in the looming prospects of the future. I am here, not to guess or to calculate politically, but to interpret, as I may be able, inspired prophecy.

The two great prophecies to which I would direct attention, are contained in the Book of Daniel, and in the Book of Revelation. These writings of Daniel and St. John are as descriptive of things future, as Genesis and Exodus of things past. They are given to be read, and why not to be understood?

The first one is in the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, where we read the interpretation of what the seer saw. It says, — "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia: and the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce

countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." (Dan. viii. 20–25.)

I do not waste your time by establishing and identifying every symbol in the passage. I assume that the identification of Bishop Newton, of Elliot and Mede, and many other distinguished interpreters of prophecy, is correct. Indeed, I have no doubt of it. First, the ram is represented and proved by them to be the Persian power. The two horns are two dynastic branches, or the Median and Persian kingdoms, shooting from one head, or grafted into the one great national power. For fifty or sixty years,—that is, from the accession of Cyrus to the Greek expedition under Xerxes,—no national power, westward, northward, or southward, was able to stand before it. This is the literal history of the progress, the triumphs, and successes of the Medo-Persian kingdom. The goat that appears in the fifth verse, as Macedonian coins still testify, was the Macedonian power. The notable horn — the remarkable or illustrious horn between the eyes—has been identified successfully

as Alexander the Great, who, in the language of verses 6 and 7, rushed against the ram, broke his horns, or destroyed the Persian kingdom, added the empire to his own, and so swelled his imperial supremacy to the highest possible pitch, and became politically "notable."

This great or notable horn broke down in its meridian: that is, Alexander the Great died in his prime, and in the midst of his victories, a melancholy proof that victory is vanity. The four horns that succeeded on the division of the empire, were the four Macedonian kingdoms, formed under the four generals of Alexander, after the battle of Issus. These are the outlines of the passage I have read. Historical facts thus fill up prophetic outlines.

The subject that specially concerns me in this investigation is the rise, locality and date, of what is here called "the little horn," described by the prophet in the most graphic terms. It was, I conceive, the representative of the Turkish and Mahometan power. First, it springs out of one of the four Macedonian kingdoms at its close. Secondly, the character of its chief is, "a king of fierce countenance, disclosing dark sentences," or a military prophet propagating strange or portentous revelations. Thirdly, his success, that he should wax exceeding great towards the south, the east, and the glory, or Jerusalem, used here in all likelihood to represent the professing Christian Church. Fourthly, the effects of his progress shall be, that he shall cast truth to the ground, cause craft to

prosper, take away the daily sacrifice, and cast down the place of Jehovah's sanctuary, that is, depress Christendom. Fifthly, he shall stamp upon the mighty ones, or secular powers; and the reason of his judging them or visiting them in his wrath is their apostasy, or the standing up against "the Prince of princes," that is, the Lord Jesus Christ; and at the end of 2300 years, according to the prophecy of this book, the sanctuary shall begin to be cleansed, or, in the language of the sixteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, the Euphratean flood, as I shall show you by and by, will begin to retire, or to evaporate and cease.

Having thus briefly given the outline of the prophetical record, let me now identify its features by stating the historical fulfilment of it, as attested in the annals of Asia and Europe. The Turkish power arose east of the Oxus, in Chorassan, a territory of the Cyro-Macedonian horn or kingdom. At that time a Turkman tribe revolted against the Sultan of Ghizni, elected Toghrul Beg for its chief, and asserted for itself the dignity, the position, and the prestige of a ruling power, though comparatively then a "a little one." Toghrul was invited by the caliph at Bagdad to help him against Persia. The Turkman chief obeyed the request, and in the language of the prophecy, advanced southward. Toghrul was next raised to the dignity of chief general of Islam; afterwards he married the caliph's daughter, and so became the powerful and fanatical missionary of Mahometanism through

eastern lands, and Greek Christendom; and not only Judea, but Asiatic Christendom, was gradually subdued by him. Gibbon, the best commentator upon past prophecy, as a daily newspaper is the best commentator upon existing and fulfilling prophecy, thus describes the victorious progress of this Turkman chief, in words almost the very echoes of Daniel's prophecy:—"From the Chinese frontier in the east, he stretched his immediate jurisdiction to the west and south, as far as the neighbourhood of Constantinople, the holy city of Jerusalem, and the spicy groves of Arabia Felix;" or, in the language of prophecy, of which Gibbon was the unconscious expounder, he "waxed exceeding great toward the east, and toward the south, and toward the glory." Daniel says, he waxed great to the host of heaven, cast the stars down and stamped upon them; and the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the Lord's sanctuary was cast down. Gibbon thus describes the Turkish progress:—"By the choice of the Sultan, Nice was preferred for his palace, and the divinity of Christ was denied and derided in the same temple in which it had been first pronounced by the first synod of Christendom. On the hard conditions of tribute and servitude, the Greek Christians might enjoy the exercise of their religion; but their most holy temples were profaned, and their priests and bishops were insulted." The idolatry and apostasy of its professors having come to the full, in the language of Daniel, they were thus punished by the scourge,

sent forth in the providence of God to chasten the apostate and the guilty nations of Christendom. The "dark sentences" of Daniel are thus translated by Gibbon, though unconscious that Daniel had so written: — "The Koran is full of endless, incoherent rhapsody and fable, sometimes crawling in the dust, at other times lost in the clouds." The fierce countenance of this predicted king, which is the picture of Daniel, is described by Gibbon, when he uses the expressien in his magnificent History, "He was fierce as a Turk." "The Turks breathed still all the fierceness of the desert." The fierceness of the Turk became at last a proverbial expression throughout Christendom. The angel in the prophecy asks how long this absolute eastern domination shall last, and the answer given, as I have stated, is 2300 years. The first question is, What is the date of the commencement of that epoch? It cannot be previous to the year 536 before Christ, because then the two-horned kingdom was in existence. It cannot be after the defeat of Xerxes in the year 480 before Christ, for then the chief glory of the Persian empire was gone; but in 480 before Christ, immediately previous to the last catastrophe of the Persian empire, Xerxes made his triumphant march into Macedon and Greece, and thus the tide of its glory was at its full, just before its ebbing. Dating, therefore, the 2300 years at that period, the Crescent, if the date be correct, should begin to wane in A. D. 1820; the Euphratean flood should then begin to evaporate,

and Turkey not be extinguished at a blow, but decline and die of gradual decrepitude, exhaustion, and decay. By and by I will show you how literally this has been fulfilled.

Having seen the picture of Daniel, let me show you, for the sake of giving the full history, another portrait, by an equally inspired penman, namely St. John, in the ninth chapter of the Apocalypse. He says: "The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had

hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon." That is one class. Then, secondly, he describes another: "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto

serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt." — Rev. ix. 1—19.

Now, first of all, in the chapter I have read we have the originator, or chief inventor or letter-loose of that smoke which darkened, soon after that date, the whole eastern part of Christendom. Secondly, we have the Saracen propagandists of Mahometan delusion, who carried their propagandism up to a point limited in this chapter by the express declaration of the inspired penman, and confirmed, as we shall see, by facts. We have next the Turks, who took up the propagandism of Mahometanism at Bagdad on the Euphrates, where the Saracens paused, and carried it onwards through the length and breadth of Asia and of Europe, till the victorious Crescent stood over the ruins of the mistress of the East, the noble and beautiful Constantinople.

Let us, then, see how exactly all this has been fulfilled in history. First, we have the great chief or originator of the system likened unto a fallen star. Both Bishop Newton and Mr. Elliot, and the best commentators on prophecy, admit that this refers to Mahomet; and the proof of it is not a conjecture, but the perfect parallelism between it and the man's biography and the historic records of modern Europe. A firmamental star denotes a ruler, secular or ecclesiastical; a fallen firmamental star, a ruler degraded, degenerate, or deposed. Mahomet was of the royal house of Koreish, the governors of Caaba, who had its key as represen-

tative of paganism. At the death of his father, Mahomet was left a destitute orphan; he fell from dignity to the earth; he had royal lineage, ancient, but now lost, greatness, and was reduced in the providence of God to the lowest level. He was a star once resplendent in the firmament; in the meridian of rule he fell, and sunk, in the language of Gibbon, to become the humble servant of a humble and a poor widow. In other words, he lost the key of the Caaba, and the dignities of its tenure, originally entrusted to his family in former days, and he became the menial servant of a poor widow, for whom he transacted business in the markets and in the chief places of merchandise in Damascus. Three miles from Mecca there was a cave (Heira), into which Mahomet, as the menial servant of this widow, was in the habit of retiring; and, in the language of Gibbon, in that cave "he held communion with the spirit of fraud and fanaticism," and from the pit, of which this cave was the meet type, he ultimately emerged, professing to be the great missionary of God, the chief recipient and proclaimer of his will throughout the length and breadth of Asia and of Eastern Europe. The chief persons in Mecca, the moment that he publicly assumed the dignity of an apostle, denounced him as a pretender, and he was expelled from the city; and that expulsion of Mahomet from the city is the date of Mahometan chronology, or the period called the Hegira, from which they date

their years, as we do from the Christian era, or birth of our Redeemer.

"After an exile of seven years," says Gibbon, "the fugitive was enthroned, the prince and prophet of his native country; the injustice of Mecca transformed the citizen of Heira into the prince, the preacher, and the leader of the armies of his country."

In the passage I have read, it is said a key was given him. The accuracy of Apocalyptic symbols is most remarkable. In the Koran it is said, Mahomet received the key of God. The Koran says, "With the key did not God give him the title and power of a porter to open the gates of a paradise?" And a form of renunciation of a Mahometan in the Greek Church is still preserved, in which these words occur: "I anathematize the teaching of Mahomet, who, they say, has the key of paradise." And on the central stone of the arch of the court of justice of the Alhambra there is at this moment in alto-relievo a large key, as the great symbol of the Mahometan jurisdiction; so much so that the key spoken of in this chapter as given to the fallen ruler, is to a Mahometan very much what the cross is to a Christian. And thus Mahomet, having lost the key of the pagan Caaba, which his forefathers had, — that is, having lost princely authority and jurisdiction there, — emerged from the abyss, having held communion, as Gibbon says, with the spirit of fraud and fanaticism, imbued with a spirit of fiery propagandism, and let loose over the length

and breadth of Asia that smoke which darkens mighty masses of the Eastern nations unto this day.

Having seen the first originator, let me look at the first propagandist missionaries of that smoke which he let loose from the abyss. The Saracens were the first, the Turks were the next. I may just remark, that the former call themselves Saracens. The Arabs profess to be the descendants of Sara; hence they call themselves Saracens, because they are ashamed to admit that they are Ishmaelites, or the descendants of Hagar. They ought properly to be called Hagarenes, as the descendants of Hagar; but professing to be the descendants of Sara, the princess, they call themselves, as a term of dignity and honour, Saracens. The first propagandists of this delusion were the Saracens; and they and their progress are depicted in symbolic language, according to prophetic usage, which I think can be identified with them and their history. The locusts, a very composite and clearly symbolic creature, described in verses 3, 7, and 10 of the ninth chapter of the Apocalypse, are the representatives of these missionaries.

Let us see the force of this by examining what the symbol denotes. A fig-tree is a symbol of Judea; a crocodile, of Egypt; a willow, of Babylon; a wild ass, of Ishmael; and a ship, of Tyre. But what is the locust a symbol of? It is a composite one, and must denote a being composite, and not a natural, literal, living animal. It must

denote some great moral feature embodied in those whom it represents. Now, the locust, first, appears in swarms, an idea almost inseparably connected with it. Secondly, its horse-like aspect denotes that the invading swarms should in some shape be associated with, or mainly consist of, cavalry. Thirdly, the lion-likeness denotes resistless ferocity. And, lastly, the scorpion-sting expresses the torment they should inflict and leave behind them. The birth-place of these locust propagandists must be the East; we read in Exodus, "the east-wind brought locusts" into Egypt. Volney says, "The locusts come from the deserts of Arabia;" and *Arbe*, the Hebrew for an Arab, is almost the same as *arba*, the Hebrew for a locust. Hence, as in Judges vi. 5, "they come as arba, or locusts." The scorpion, in the next place, is always traced in Scripture to Arabia. Moses says, "the wilderness, where fiery serpents and scorpions are." The horse, I need not say, is popularly an Arab symbol. Arabia is his home. We read of the Arab steed, as the model of a horse. The whole zoology of the symbol is strictly Arab. But superadded to the symbol is this remarkable fact, that they had the faces of men, the long hair of women, crowns on their heads, and breastplates of iron; or, translated into literal language, the courage of men, the effeminacy of women, invulnerability and triumph in battle. These were not, I observe, the Goths, because the Goths had not the faces of men; they shaved off the moustache, and were

charged by Eastern nations with having effeminate faces. They were not, in the next place, the Greeks and Romans; for long hair, another part of the symbol, was an abomination to them. Pliny specifies the Arabs as wearing the moustache on the upper lip, as having the long hair like women, and having turbans like crowns; and in the Antar, a celebrated Arabic poem, it is said God has bestowed upon Arabs four heavenly gifts—

> "Turbans for diadems, tents for walls,
> Swords for entrenchments, and poems for laws."

The Koran specifies the breastplate of the Arab as the gift of God. The locust is the national emblem of the Ishmaelite, or Arab; and it is related by Turkish writers, that a swarm of locusts alighted on Mahomet's head, and on each of their wings was written, "We are the army of God." We thus identify completely the symbol with the Saracens, or the Arab Mahometans.

Now, soon after the rise of the Mahometan smoke from the pit, we read that "the Saracens embraced the new and startling imposture, and, imbued intensely with its fanaticism, they rushed in overwhelming crowds into the eastern parts of Christendom." Hallam says, "The religion of Mahomet is essentially military. The people of Arabia found in the law of their prophet, not a licence, but a command to desolate the world." Like locusts they descended in swarms into Europe, with all the ferocity of lions, with all the fleetness of steeds, indulging in sensual licence upon earth,

and expecting as their reward sensual enjoyments in paradise.

Having thus identified the symbol with the Saracens, let us now turn to history, and read, as its comment upon the inspired page, the history and deeds of the Saracens. In the year 629 the Saracens first emerged from the desert; in A.D. 636 they burst forth, like an impetuous torrent; Damascus and Jerusalem fell successively before them; and that very year, the year 636, a mosque was raised on the site of the illustrious temple of the Jew, and the cry of the muezzin wafted by that air which had once sounded with the Psalms of David, and echoed with hosannas to David's greater Son. In ten years, from 634 to 644, the Mahometans reduced 3,600 cities, destroyed 4,000 churches, and built 1,400 mosques; and the illustration of the scorpion-sting is in these words—"Ye Christian dogs, ye know your choice; the Koran, the tribute, or the cimeter." And those that were spared, they tormented with the scorpion-sting of the lawless tyranny which they exercised.

But the progress of these Saracens, you see in the sacred page, had two limits: first, they were not to hurt any that had the seal of God upon their foreheads; and, secondly, they were not to hurt the green grass, or any green thing. Now, both of these are remarkably fulfilled. The first was fulfilled in this fact: at the time that they went forth, according to the language of Gibbon, "the Christians of the seventh century had relapsed into

the semblance of Paganism; their public and private prayers were addressed to images and relics that disgraced the temples of the heathen: and the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, saints and angels, the objects of popular veneration." These idolatrous Christians, who were not sealed of God, were the objects of the punishment of the locust propagandists, commissioned not to hurt the secret and hidden saints of the Most High, but to visit with retributive and penal judgments those who had turned the Christian fane into an idol temple, and wreathed around the brow of a creature the glories that were the exclusive prerogatives of God himself. And secondly, they were not to hurt any green thing. How remarkable it is, these are almost the very words of the commission given to the Saracens: "Destroy no palm-trees nor fields of corn; cut down no fruit-trees nor green things." The Goths turned every garden into a desert; the Saracens sacredly preserved them.

And lastly, they had a king over them. The Goths and Vandals adopted the religion of the country they conquered; the Saracens carried their religion with them, and their subjection to Mahomet, their prince and prophet, was part and parcel of their most solemn duty. Their mission was not to annihilate the apostate Christians of the East, but to torment them; and the time of their tormenting them was limited to one hundred and fifty years. Every time that the Saracens tried to

go beyond their limit they were checked and repressed. Twice they were foiled in their attempts at Constantinople. They invaded France; and if they had succeeded in subjugating that illustrious land, Europe at this moment had probably been Mahometan. "Charles Martel the Hammer," the historian says, "beat them back; and Europe owes the existence of its liberties and its religion to his heroic efforts." But as soon as they had finished their commission, we find they immediately paused. Hallam says,—"Their conquests are less perplexing than the cessation of them." Gibbon says,—"The calm historian must study to explain by what means Church and state were saved from impending desolation." The true reason was the prophetic record. The period of their action—that is, of their inflicting torment on apostate Christendom—was limited to one hundred and fifty years. Mark how true this is. In 612 Mahomet first proclaimed his mission. "Who," he said, "will be my Grand Vizier?" The answer given by his chief follower was,—"O, prophet! I am the man. Whoever rises against thee, I will dash out his teeth, tear out his locks and his eyes, and rip him up." In 755 the dynasty of the Ommiades was supplanted in the caliphate by the Abassides; and thus they were rent into antagonistic powers. In 762 another capital, Medina al Salem, further east, was selected, and there the locust settled. Now hear what the historian says. "The colossus," says Sismondi, "that had be-

stridden the whole south was now broken; and this revolt did more for the deliverance of Europe from the Moslem than the battle of Poictiers." And Gibbon says,—"War was now no longer the passion of the Saracens. The luxury of the caliphs relaxed their nerves, and terminated the progress of the Arabian empire." Now, see how chronologically exact this was. In 612 was the commencement of the mission of Mahomet; 762 was the cessation of their progress and their conquest. Deduct 612 from 762, and you have 150 years, called in the Apocalypse 150 prophetic days — the precise period during which their action, progress, and success were to continue.

We have thus seen, what is called in the Apocalypse, the first, or the Saracenic woe. Let us turn to the Turkish, or the second woe, as it is therein called. Heretofore Western Christendom had been the chief sufferer from the Saracen; Eastern Christendom was no less guilty than the West; and hence on the very spot—and this will explain why we identify Turkey and Mahometanism with the Euphrates — on which the Saracens had settled down, namely, Bagdad on the Euphrates, the angels of retribution were again let loose, and the Turks marched forth under Toghrul Beg, their constituted head, to promote the secular power and religious domination of Islam, and to devastate Eastern Christendom, as the Saracens before them had devastated Asia and the West. Alp Arslan, the valiant lion, crossed the Euphrates, — the com-

mencement of Turkish propagandism,—in 1063, at the head of immense Turkish cavalry; and began a career of resistless conquests over the whole of Eastern Christendom, till he fell by the knife of the assassin. Malek Shah succeeded, and spread his victories, in the words of Gibbon, "from the spicy groves of Arabia Felix to Constantinople." The Crusaders averted for a season the downfall of the imperial city, but in so doing they consolidated the forces of the Ottoman; and at the end of the fourteenth century, the Turks crossed the Danube; and Gibbon says, "For the first time during a thousand years, Constantinople was surrounded both on the Asiatic and the European sides." The Apocalypse calls them, "the number of the armies of horsemen." Let us recollect, the Western warriors were chiefly infantry—the Eastern warriors were chiefly cavalry. Gibbon says, "The myriads of Turkish horse overspread the Greek empire;" and Peter the Hermit, and patriarch of Jerusalem, wrote to their brethren in the West in these words: "We call for help; the forces of the Turks are fierce, and more numerous than the Saracens; they have in anticipation devoured the whole world."

Thus, the closer we read, the clearer we see the accuracy of the Apocalyptic symbols as we proceed. It is said that "out of their mouths came smoke and brimstone and fire." At this very time, and primarily at the siege of Constantinople, gunpowder and cannon were used, at least on a vast

scale, and a park of artillery planted with its devastating thunders against Constantinople; and it is in the very chapter in which Gibbon describes the fall of the mistress of the East, that he alludes to the mighty effects of the recent and mysterious mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal. "Canst thou cast a cannon," said the Sultan Mahomet to the founder, "large enough to batter down the walls of Constantinople?" The cannon were founded at Adrianople; and soon the battlements and fortifications that had stood the shock of a thousand years, fell before the Ottoman cannon. Gibbon says, "Double walls were reduced by the cannon; the Turks rushed in at the breaches; Constantinople was subdued; her empire was subverted, her religion trampled in the dust, by the Moslem conqueror;" — or, in the words of the inspired penman, by these three, the fire, the smoke, (or the carbon), and the sulphur, which issued out of their mouths, was the third part of Christendom made desolate.

Then it is added, as if still further to identify them: "Their power," their ἐξουσία, that is, their jurisdiction, "is in their tails." What a strange expression is this! A crown is a mark of a king, a diadem of an emperor, a sword of a military prefect; but a horse's tail, what can that be a mark of? Notice again the accuracy of Apocalyptic symbols. In one of the great battles of the Turks, the commander lost the standard of his army; he immediately dismounted, cut off his

horse's tail, hoisted it on a pole, and made that the rallying standard of the Turks. And what is the fact to this day? A pasha of two, or a pasha of three horse tails, is now the description of Turkish dignitaries and rulers; and under the shelter of these, in past days, they have, not "hurt," as we render it, but "done injustice." So accurately do we identify the words of prophecy with the chapters of history! Now, mark again: "Just as we had specified exactly the time,—150 years,—during which the Saracens were to punish apostate Christendom, we have now the period fixed during which the Turks are to punish the same, though more Eastern, apostate Christendom. The time is appointed — a day, a month, a year, and an hour. Now, prophetically viewed, — for prophecy is just like the map of a country, upon the scale of an eighth of an inch for a mile,—you have here a day for a year, as you may easily see by referring to various parts of Scripture. A month, 30 years; a year, 365¼ years; an hour, 15½ days. Add all these together, and they amount to 396 years, 106 days. Now, let us see how exactly this prophecy was fulfilled in fact. The Turks started on their mission from Bagdad on the Euphrates, on Jan. 18th, 1057. On May 29th, 1453, their last exploit was consummated, when Constantinople fell. Deduct Jan. 18th, 1057, from May 29th, 1453, and you have the prophecy chronologically proved by fact, or as is proclaimed in the prophecy of the Apocalypse, the duration, 396 years, 106 days,

Having seen the successes achieved by the Saracens, and next by the Turks; having seen how history sustains and bears out the words of prophecy, I observe that the waves of the Euphratean flood, that overflowed its banks, and spread from the spicy groves of Arabia to Constantinople, are now retreating to their shores, or rather, drying up in their channels, and since 1820 the flood has evaporated day by day; and as the Euphratean flood retreats from the lands it has covered as by a deluge, and evaporates in the sunshine, or rolls to its ancient channel, thousands of true Christians, Armenians and Greeks, not, as their fathers have been, the worst specimens of a corrupt Christianity, but by the instrumentality of missionaries regenerated, illumined, and sanctified, begin to raise their heads, and to aspire after that glorious supremacy when Christ shall be King over all the earth. Constantinople may be Christian; yet it may not, and it must not be Russian. St. Sophia need not be under the auspices of the Czar, nor the patriarch of Constantinople made a subject of the patriarch of St. Petersburg; and yet the decay of Mahometanism is as plainly proclaimed in this sacred volume as any one fact that can happen in history. During the sixth vial, which began about 1820, the Euphrates is to be dried up, to make way for the kings of the East. It would take too much space if I were to quote all the proofs of this drying up ever since 1820, when the prophecy tells us it was to begin. The 2300 years of Daniel, I have

already said, were to end in 1820. At that period, then, Mahometanism was to begin to give way. Now, just read the facts of the case. One interpreter, who wrote upwards of two hundred years ago, accepted the symbol of the "drying up of the Euphrates," as predicted under the sixth Apocalyptic vial, as the gradual exhaustion of the Mahometan power; and almost every prophetic student since that time has furnished stronger, and to my mind, absolutely conclusive proofs of the accuracy of this interpretation.

Another eminent interpreter stated, at least a hundred years ago, that about 1820 the Turkish power would begin its course of wasting and decay. That year, viz. 1820, is universally accepted by prophetic students as the beginning of the "drying up of the Euphrates," or decadence of Mahometanism primarily in Europe, and progressively over all Asia.

It was in 1820 that Ali Pasha, of Yanina, proclaimed his independence, and hastened on the Greek insurrection. The Suliot Greeks raised the standard of revolt in November of the same year against the Sultan. In April 1821 the Moreote Greeks broke out in insurrection. Northern Greece, the Isles of the Ægean Sea, and the Danubian provinces revolted. In the Morea the Greeks destroyed an army of 30,000 Turks in 1823. By sea the Greeks beat the Turkish and Egyptian fleets in September 1824. In 1827, when the Greeks seemed for a season to give way, the

combined fleets of England, France, and Russia destroyed the Turco-Egyptian fleets at the battle of Navarino, saved Greece, and struck a blow against Turkey from which the Ottoman empire has never recovered. In 1828, Russia feeling insulted, declared war, crossed the Balkan, entered Adrianople, and Constantinople was saved only by the interposition of the Western ambassadors. But by this last step, the exhaustion of Turkey, or "drying up of the Euphrates," was very greatly increased. Servia, Wallachia, and Moldavia were all practically detached from Turkey, and in the same year the Turkish province of Algiers became a French colony. As if the fanaticism of Turkey, which used to be its strength, had degenerated into folly and infatuation, she massacred the Janizaries, her right arm, and found this reform was her ruin.

Afterwards came the rebellion of Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt; and such was his progress, that if the Western powers had not again interposed, Turkey had been annihilated. From 1821 to 1831, earthquakes, plague, and pestilence almost depopulated Bagdad, Mecca, and Medina. The Rev. Mr. Walsh, the British Chaplain at Constantinople, writing in 1831, says, as I have already quoted, "Within the last twenty years Constantinople has lost more than half its population. Two conflagrations happened while I was in Constantinople, and destroyed 15,000 houses. The silent operation of the plague is continually active, though not always alarming. It will be no exagge-

ration to say, that within the period mentioned, from 300,000 to 400,000 have been prematurely swept away in this one city of Europe, by causes which were not operating in any other,—conflagration, pestilence, and civil commotion." I give these historic facts to show that what the earliest students of prophecy were led to infer, respecting the gradual exhaustion of the Ottoman power, and the date of the beginning of its decline, has been exactly fulfilled.

So striking are the prophetic dates relating to the exhaustion of the Ottoman empire, that one interpreter of prophecy in 1840 fixed the period of its end at 1849, as the earliest date; and almost every student of prophecy, of any note or name, Mr. Elliot, Dr. Keith, Mr. Bickersteth, and Mr. Birks, were unanimous in regarding its utter overthrow as just at our doors, before the present invasion of Russia. I do not say that our views of unfulfilled prophecy are to regulate cabinets; but it is interesting to us calmly yet patiently to look on the present complications in the East as the irresistible harbingers of the speedy extinction of error; and we almost regret that our great nation should be dragged into war as if to avert what we regard as a foregone conclusion prophetically viewed, and a consummation, which, on other grounds, we would hasten rather than delay. But we do not war to maintain the Crescent, but to beat back from us and ours a powerful despotism. Students of prophecy are neither fatalists nor prophets, but

investigators of those glimpses of the future which the Author of the Bible has been pleased to reveal.

The same prophetic record that thus indicates the near downfall of Mahometanism, informs us that this downfall is to make way for the march of "kings from the sun-rising." Whether this refers to the Jews, as I believe, or to the emergence of the ancient Oriental Churches, is matter of dispute. But this is plain, that the Christians of the East will gain in all respects by the waning of the Crescent, and prove a better obstruction to Russia's ambition than the Turks.

Now, it seems clear from the words of Daniel's prophecy, that the great Mahometan delusion, — for such, as Christians, we must regard it,—and its head and strength, the Ottoman dynasty, will not be struck down by a blow, as Russia expects, but must, if prophecy be true, gradually and progressively expire. It dies out; its waters are literally evaporated; it expires of age, decrepitude, and decay. I do not believe, from prophecy, that the Russian eagle will be allowed to tear it to pieces, or to have the Sultan's palace for its eyrie. I do not believe that it will be suffered to disappear, till the last pulse beats feebly in the Mahometan heart; but whether there is peace or war, Turkey is equally exhausted. If Russia persists in her infatuated ambition, Turkey, as a Mahometan power, will be destroyed; if Russia is compelled, before the bayonets of Europe, to retire to the Kremlin, the Turkish exchequer will be exhausted; and, in either case,

the prophecy of its expiry will be fulfilled. It will "be broken without hand." The waters of the great Euphrates will gradually evaporate. Our country at this moment, in taking the part of the Ottoman empire, seems to me fulfilling a solemn and a sacred duty. Treaty, promise, compact, and the everlasting duty of the strong to sympathise with the weak and the oppressed, vindicate the conduct of our country. Nations have duties and responsibilities, just as individuals have. This protection does not imply that we approve of Mahometanism, or that we wish prosperity to the Crescent, or that we have forgotten the barbarities of the Saracen, and the fearful tragedies inflicted upon Europe by the Turk; but, let our worst of enemies be injured and insulted, it is the duty of a Christian to interpose and protect him. Suppose our worthy ecclesiastical "ruler," Dr. Wiseman, were insulted in the streets of London by a mob, I should feel it my duty to interpose and protect him. Because he dislikes me, and I dislike his principles, I will not forget that I am a man, and whatever is human commands my sympathies, — still less, that I am a Christian, bound to sympathise with suffering as such, and heap coals of fire upon the head of those that are opposed to me.

And, in the next place, it is most remarkable, that if we turn to the prophet Ezekiel, — and for one moment I will do so,—we shall find that while Russia is unconsciously hastening the end predicted in prophecy, every act of her conduct is reprobated

and condemned. In the "Hebrew Observer," written by unconverted Jews, there is a leading article, of the date of February 10, 1854, most ably written, called the "Eastern Question;" which states that Russia is the Meshech and the Tubal, or the Ross, Moscow, and Tobolsk mentioned in the Old Testament; and these Jews say, that if the Russian Autocrat should sweep away Turkey, their existence as Jews in Turkey is gone. Under the Crescent, they say, they have had freedom,—under the Autocrat they have had cruelty, tyranny, and murder; and, if he should get the upper hand, they must leave the realms of the East. And then what will be the case? From the sun-rising, as predicted in prophecy, the Jews will march homeward, or flee, like doves to their windows, and find no rest for the soles of their feet till they arrive in Palestine—theirs by everlasting right, and the decree that cannot be abolished. Now, in Ezekiel, chap. xxxviii., we have this remarkable prophecy,—so remarkable that it seems to me to refer to these days: "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,"—(How like the names Moscow and Tobolsk!)—"and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great

company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."—(How like what is taking place!)—"After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought"—(suppose this addressed to the Autocrat:)—"and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of

Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face; for in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel."

If this, then, relate — and it relates to the last days — to Gog, and Magog, and Tubal, as the representative names of Russia and its chief cities, then we see that whilst he fulfils, as the axe in the hand of the Almighty, prophecies that relate to

the future, he is not thereby exempt from punishment, or free from guilt, because he himself is a free agent, though used in the hands of Him who has the command, and the control, and the government of all. Our views of prophecy are not to modify our duties. The Czar may fulfil prophecies, and yet be most guilty. It is not our business to fulfil prophecies, but to obey precepts. Because, for instance, it is predicted, "A Jew shall be a scoff, a by-word, and a scorn," some men think they cannot do a more Christian act than spit upon a Jew, extract his teeth, maltreat him, and call him by bad names. Leave God to fulfil the prophecies He has inspired; you fulfil the duties He has laid down — justice, mercy, sympathy, and love.

It is most interesting to see the great panorama of the future sketched in its minutest details on the sacred page, and to witness autocrats from their thrones, and armies from their barracks, rushing, in the nineteenth century, to fill up the outline that God has chalked out upwards of two thousand years ago. I know it will be said, Turkey is dying; it will soon be defunct; why should we care for it? I answer, — If a man were dying of consumption, we should not think of knocking him on the head and killing him outright; on the contrary, we should try to get him the warmest blankets and the most nourishing food, and shelter him from the winds and the biting frost and the storms, and protract his life to the latest period. And because Turkey is feeble, because it is dying of a

consumption that is obvious and inevitable, that is no reason why the Autocrat should strike it down, and why nations that are Christian should stand by and suffer the tyrant to inflict the blow.

It is singular enough that the Turks themselves are almost universally persuaded that the hour of their doom has struck. At this moment the dead that die in the European part of the city are carried across the Bosphorus and buried on the Asiatic side, where they think they will rest in peace. They have also a tradition amongst themselves, that 1854 ends the dynasty of the Turk in Europe; and Napoleon Bonaparte in St. Helena, forty years ago, with that extraordinary sagacity with which that great man's mind was characterised, said: "In the natural course of things, in a few years Turkey must fall to Russia. The greatest part of her population are Greeks, who, you may say, are Russians. The Powers it would injure—and who could oppose it?—are England, France, Prussia, and Austria. Now, as to Austria, it will be very easy for Russia to engage her assistance by giving her Servia, and other provinces bordering upon the Austrian dominions, reaching near to Constantinople. The only hypothesis that France and England may ever be allied with sincerity will be in order to prevent this. But even this alliance will not avail. France, England, and Prussia united, cannot prevent it. Russia and Austria can at any time effect it. Once mistress of Constantinople, Russia gets all the commerce of the Mediterranean, becomes a

great naval Power, and God knows what may happen. She quarrels with you, marches off to India an army of 70,000 good soldiers, which to Russia is nothing, and 100,000 *canaille*, Cossacks and others, and England loses India. Above all the other powers, Russia is the most to be feared, especially by you. Her soldiers are braver than the Austrians, and she has the means of raising as many as she pleases. In bravery, the French and English soldiers are the only ones to be compared to them. All this I foresaw. I see into futurity further than others, and I wanted to establish a barrier against those barbarians by re-establishing the kingdom of Poland, and putting Poniatowski at the head of it as king: but your *imbéciles* of ministers would not consent. A hundred years hence I shall be praised, and Europe, especially England, will lament that I did not succeed. When they see the finest countries in Europe overrun, and a prey to those northern barbarians, they will say, 'Napoleon was right.'" Now, at this moment the Greek and Armenian Christians are, many of them, being translated from darkness into light, and from the kingdom of Satan into that of God's dear Son. At present many of the Greek and Armenian Christians, as a body, are much less truthful, much more depraved, than even the worst of the Turks; but is it impossible to suppose that these degraded Christians shall be the subjects of a new and a noble resurrection?—that the Crescent shall not wane till it disappears before the Cross,—

that the moon of Islam shall not set, till it is merged in the rising splendour of the Sun of righteousness? and a nation Christian to its core take the place of the Mahometans, and form a stronger barrier to Russian ambition and Russian domination than a dying, exhausted, and decrepit empire? But is the Mahometan himself impervious to light? The predicted decay of Mahometanism as a power may be the prophecy of her resurrection as a Christian dynasty. Everybody knows that Turkey of 1854 is not the same as Turkey in the days of Napoleon Bonaparte. The paddle-wheel now disturbs the silence of the Dardanelles; the scream of the railway whistle echoes from the walls of St. Sophia; the printing-press is busy in Constantinople; our newspapers are read by the Turks; a spirit of reform is sweeping the Divan that will end in a grand reformation; and, mainly through the instrumentality of American missionaries, the Turks begin to discover that the Christian faith is not that degraded and brutish superstition which has hitherto been embodied in the miserable specimens that have dwelt in the midst of them; and the ancient savage law, which made it death for a man who had become a Mussulman and was once a Christian to revert to his Christianity again, is now abolished; and so late as 1846 the Armenian patriarch, according to usage, sent in the names of thirteen Protestants to the Sultan, praying that, according to custom, at his bidding, they might be banished from the land. The Sultan replied, that

"henceforth no subject of his should suffer for his religious opinions." The greatest persecutors in Turkey for the last hundred years have not always been the Mahometans, but, I say it with shame, the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ have been too often intolerant; and at this moment the greatest advocates of liberty are the Sultan and his Grand Vizier, not perhaps from principle, bu policy; and, a thousand times sooner, as far as secular and personal freedom is concerned, let me fall into the hands of the Sultan and his Grand Vizier, than into the hands of Pio Nono and his Grand Vizier in Golden Square.

The prophetic decay of the Turk, as the bulwark of Islam, does not necessarily mean the extinction of the Turk, but the exchange of his errors for everlasting and glorious truth. Not the destruction of the man, but the departure of his superstition, may be the fulfilment of the prophecy. This is the existing course of things in the East. Christianity is not a religion of annihilation, but of amelioration, elevation, improvement; and when the present dark and tainted streams of the Euphrates, that have so long overflowed the fair lands of Eastern Christendom, shall have retired, or rolled back to their ancient channels, or rather evaporated beneath the beams of the unsetting sun, the lands from which those floods have ebbed away shall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters of the ocean cover the channels of the great deep; and that river whose streams

make glad the city of our God shall roll where the Euphrates had rolled its tide before; and

"With anthems of devotion,
Ships from the isles shall meet,
And pour the wealth of ocean
In tribute at His feet.

"For Christ shall have dominion
O'er river, sea, and shore;
Far as the eagle's pinion,
Or dove's light wing can soar."

What is called the "Eastern question" may be lulled for a little, but only to be resuscitated with more terrible results. The source of its protracted agitation lies in the moral condition of the East. The age, also, in which we live has for its awful and its ominous motto — "Overturn, overturn, overturn." This is the partial destiny of the good; we trust it is the doom of all that is unholy and evil. What comes from God is sustained by him. What is evil is weak. The Crescent is doomed to wane; the Tiara trembles on the head of him that wears it; and superstition, in all its aspects, will soon flee before the approach of an unsetting sun: and while statesmen in their official capacity, and nations in their national capacity, are doing their duty to the oppressed, and trying to stay the oppressor, let us as Christians do ours, by extending missions, circulating God's word, urging onward into every land that blessed kingdom which conquers by truth, not arms — reigns by love, not force—and is "not meat nor drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

I grieve that our brave and heroic troops should be sent to bleed and fall on distant shores; I grieve over the existence of war; but I believe that the war now provoked by the ambition of the Russian Autocrat, and accepted by our country, is a war, not only of policy, but of justice, of truthfulness, of mercy. The guilt rests on Russia. I pity the infatuated Autocrat; may his punishment be signal, or his repentance speedy! May his ambition meet with reward! May he learn in the Kremlin that justice and truth and mercy are stronger than Cossacks, and more enduring than armed battalions; and whilst our intrepid soldiers on the land, and our brave sailors on the Baltic and the Black Sea, inspired by a sense of the justice of their cause, are battling not only for mercy to the oppressed, but for protection to our dear native land,—whilst they, like Joshua, are warring in the plains below, let us, like Moses, lift up our hearts and hands, and pray that He "to whom the shields of the earth belong," would uphold and bless the banners of the right.

We have no sympathy with the Koran, no desire to uphold the Mosque, no wish to see the Osmanli strike deeper, or extend wider his withering footprint. But we have no less dread of autocratic tyranny, and of the lust of power. Acquiescence in this matter would be connivance. It would not avert ultimate war. We pray that the Prince of Peace may soon spread his love and law over all the earth.

III.

THE CHRISTIAN, AND HIS HOPE.

I EXPECT that some, especially those who have not studied the subject, will dissent from the conclusions which I have carefully, prayerfully, and humbly gathered from God's most holy word; but when I present the views or deductions that seem right, I hope I shall state them with simplicity, with all absence of dogmatism, and with humble submission to the authority of the Holy Spirit, speaking in his own word, which will at least commend the spirit in which I speak, if it do not make good the conclusions to which I have arrived. On truths indispensably essential to vital religion we may speak with explicit and unqualified confidence, but on unfulfilled prophecy we must speak humbly, deferentially, often doubtingly, treading with tenderness and caution, bearing in mind distinctly and plainly the great and blessed truths on which we do agree, and taking heed to them as unto stars shining in a dark night, until the Sun of Righteousness arises with perfect healing under his wings.

The personal coming of our blessed Lord in glory, the hope of the Christian, does appear to

me as no less clearly revealed in God's holy word than was the personal advent of the Saviour, to be sacrificed for the sins of all. All Christians believe that Christ will come again; but some think that he will come previous to the millennial glory; others, that he will come at the close of the millennial glory. It rests with each investigator of God's holy word to decide whether that advent shall be pre-millennial or post-millennial, and what shall be the accompaniments of that glorious day when he shall come again a second time without sin unto salvation.

Let me briefly bring before your notice a few of the texts that allude to the second coming of our Lord, and you will at once see how frequently the subject is introduced in prophecy. Acts iii. 19,—"When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Matt. xxiv. 30,—"And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. xxv. 31,—"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." 2 Thess. i. 7,—"The Lord Jesus

shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts i. 11,—"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Luke xii. 40,—"The Son of man cometh in an hour when ye think not." Again,—"The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night." Again, Matt. xxiv. 27,—"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." 1 Thess. iv. 16,—"The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord." And again, in Dan. vii. 14,—"There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Let me call your attention also to Titus ii. 14,—"Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." This passage is wrongly translated; for the great God our Father is never said to appear a second time; it is, literally rendered, "That blessed hope, that glorious per-

sonal appearance of Jesus Christ, our great God and Saviour;" where our Redeemer is called the great God and Saviour. When he comes a second time, then "we shall see him as he is;" we shall reign with him in heaven, we shall dwell with him in glory. The attitude of the Church in the present dispensation is that of the bride looking for the bridegroom, and nothing will satisfy the bride but the bridegroom; nothing will comfort the waiting widow but the presence of the everlasting husband. The great high priest of the Jewish nation was a perfect type of Christ. What was his office at their great and solemn feast? He offered up sacrifice, and then went into the Holy of Holies to make intercession for the people, and then he came forth from the Holy of Holies and blessed the people. Now, our great High Priest exactly corresponds to theirs. He has offered up a perfect sacrifice once for all without the camp, and is now in the Holy of Holies, in heaven itself, where he makes intercession for us. But what was the attitude of the Jewish people when the high priest was in the Holy of Holies? They were waiting for him to come forth to bless them. What is to be our attitude while our great High Priest, having offered up the sacrifice, is in the true holy place? Unlike the Roman Catholic, we should not continue to offer the sacrifice, but we should now be waiting on the tiptoe of expectation for our great High Priest to come forth to bless us from the Holy of Holies. It is alike the Christian's duty and privilege to look

forward for the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We wait for him. "

It does appear evident that no millennial state will precede our Lord's personal advent. I know that some excellent Christians differ from me on this, therefore you will pardon me if I try to state distinctly what the word of God indicates respecting this point. If we turn to the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, we shall find an important explanation at the twenty-first verse. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man sowing good seed in a field; and while he slept, the enemy went in and sowed tares: and when the seed sprang up, the tares and the wheat came up together. What did the Lord of the harvest do? Did he send men forthwith as the reapers to separate them? No; he said, "Let both grow together until the harvest; and then I will say to the reapers, Gather first the tares, and then bind them in bundles and burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." It is so in the present dispensation; the good and bad grow up together, and are not separated until the end; and as the tares were gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this dispensation, for the Son of Man shall come and cast out the unbelievers into a furnace of fire, "where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," and gather the good into heavenly habitations. The whole Christian economy is a composite one. The visible church is not all pure wheat, but a mixture of tares and wheat, and it appears it will continue to be so

till Christ himself comes at the end of this dispensation. It is quite plain that there will be no such thing as a perfect visible church till the Lord comes. It will continue a mixture of good and bad until the end. I regard, in fact, the very existence of a visible church very much as I do a provisional committee. We used to hear in railway times of provisional committees. These were simply committees appointed to act until the true or competent committee should be appointed. The whole visible church is at this moment purely provisional; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is provisional shall be done away. Meantime the church is made up of tares and wheat, and this mixture will continue throughout this dispensation, till there arrive that perfect state after the advent, in which there will be neither flaw, nor sin, nor defect, but all God's people shall be presented a glorious church, without spot or blemish or any such thing. This takes place at the advent of Christ: but those who hold that the millennium must come first, must conclude that the tares will be separated from the wheat a thousand years before Christ comes. According to the text I have read, they will not be separated until Christ himself comes, and therefore the perfect church is not prior, but subsequent to Christ's advent, and therefore Christ's advent is pre-millennial and not post-millennial. In the second chapter of the second of Thessalonians we read,—"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except

there come" (as I shall translate it) "the apostasy, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they have not received the love of the truth, that they might be saved." We are told in this chapter that the great apostasy commenced in the Apostle's days, and that it would continue till Christ shall come again. According to those who hold that the millennium precedes Christ's advent, Popery is to be destroyed by the preaching of the Gospel; but according to the Apostle Paul, Popery is to be wasted progressively by the preaching of the Gospel, but to be uprooted and destroyed finally at and by Christ's advent — indicating that it will be co-existent with this dispensation. I cannot conceive any one passage of Scripture more fatal to the theory that the millennium precedes Christ's advent than this prediction of the great apostasy. It begins in the days of the Apostle, stretches forward to the millennial glory,

and is to be destroyed, not by the preaching of the Gospel, but only by the personal advent and glorious appearing of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In another passage, in the first chapter of the Acts, we read, that when the disciples were assembled together, they asked the Lord, saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Every Jew looked then for a temporal Messiah, and every Jew still expects Messiah to come in temporal glory. But what answer did our Lord make to the inquiry? Not, Your expectation is wrong; but, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." I believe so far with the Jew, that Christ will come in his everlasting glory. The Jew, however, has passed over the first advent, and sees the promise of the second only. When the Apostles said, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" our Lord did not answer that they must not look for such a thing. He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power:" intimating that God would restore the kingdom to Israel, and that the only point then hid from them was the time and the season that he would select; and the two men in white apparel, that spake to them from heaven, said,—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,"—and surely this must

be his personal advent. They saw him ascend from amongst them, and a cloud receive him into glory; and we shall see him again return in a cloud, and descend upon the earth in the same cloud, surrounded by the same glory. In the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, the promise made specially to the Apostles indicates the same truth, when our Lord says—"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, in the regeneration, ye also" (that is, ye who have followed me now) "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The Greek here is ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ, or the age thus delineated. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Now this promise made to the Apostles of sitting upon thrones in the regeneration or restoration of all things, is evidently connected with the fulfilment of the promise in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, where Christ is described as descending from heaven to his redeemed and ransomed people. In Daniel it is thus described—"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient

of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him."

The second coming of Christ is also referred to in such texts as these — "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." He shall come as the *lightning* shineth from the east to the west." According to the theory that the millennium precedes Christ's advent, it ought to be, "as the *light* shineth from the east to the west;" but it is not the growing light, but, "the *lightning* flash," instant—unexpected. So shall it be with the coming of the Son of Man. In the prophet Zechariah, sixth chapter, we read — "Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be upon them both." And again, in the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, at the ninth verse — "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." So also — "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the

Lord." But, some say, these predictions of the advent of Christ may be legitimately construed as purely spiritual. I would ask of those that think so, Is there a promise in the whole Bible that Christ will come personally? If you insist upon these prophecies being figurative only, or spiritual, and not literal, then there is not a text in the whole word of God that will satisfy you that Christ will personally come at all. Consequently, the texts I have read do not denote a spiritual, but a personal advent. The spiritual Christ is come. The spiritual Christ was present when John said—"Come, Lord Jesus;" the spiritual Christ was present when the Apostles said he would come, for his own promise is—"Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And another promise is—"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Christ is spiritually present with his Church from the commencement of this dispensation, and, therefore, the promises and prayers and expectations which relate to his coming, not yet realized, must refer to his personal, not to the spiritual advent, which is already felt and experienced by us.

According to the theory that the millennium precedes Christ's advent, there is to be 1000 years of perfect joy, unstained and unclouded sunshine, and then at the end of the 1000 years Christ is to come; but, according to the Apostle, our Lord is to find the wheat mingled with the tares when he comes. He is to find the great apostasy stretching

over the earth; he is to punish the wicked whom he then finds on the earth with everlasting punishment.

To show still further what takes place when Christ comes, we are told by St. Peter, that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Some will say we fix dates, but I deny that we do so any more than Scripture does. Those that hold the post-millennial advent, fix dates; for when 500 years are passed of the 1000, they may say, in 500 years more Christ will come; and when 975 years will be elapsed, they will be able to say, in 25 years Christ will come. It is the post-millennial advocates who fix dates. I think, in the matter of dates, we can only have some incidental glimpses of the approaching glory, scattered as early sunbeams on the mountain tops, to make God's people gird up their loins for their Lord's glorious appearing, and to make them ready for his coming. St. Peter says — "All things shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." And what then are believers to look for? "We, then, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." I gather from this passage, that the instant Christ comes to this world — and that coming is not far distant—the earth will melt with fervent heat, and the elements shall pass away, and be at once converted into a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. There is nothing improbable in this combustion and trans-

formation. The most accomplished geologists have now come to the conclusion, that the globe on which we live is merely a hard crust, and that the interior of this globe is one rolling ocean of liquid fire; and that the volcanoes are the occasional safety valves that let out the superabundant pressure in the interior, and prevent a premature explosion. God has only to let loose the imprisoned fire, and the whole earth will become calcined by heat, and a new heaven and a new earth will take its place. I mention this only to show that there is nothing improbable in it.

Laplace, and other great astronomers, have watched worlds above, that have successively appeared in a state of combustion. Astronomers have seen stars begin first to burn with red heat, then reduced to a white heat, and they have watched until they have been calcined, and have entirely disappeared; the phenomena of burning worlds have been detected by the telescope before now, and, therefore, we have analogies to strengthen (if any strengthening be required) the prediction of the Apostle, that the earth will be burned up, and a new heaven and a new earth succeed. I do not believe that this earth will be annihilated. This globe was beautiful and fair when it came from the plastic hands of the Creator some 6000 years ago; and God has only to expunge that which mars and disfigures it,—namely, sin,—to make it again the same fair and beautiful globe, till its very deserts rejoice and blossom as the rose. I could take you

to the Highlands of Scotland, and to glens so beautiful, where, if I could be assured that no sin and no tears should come, I could consent to live for ever. I do not see why God should give up this earth as a hopeless thing. There is no reason for its being destroyed. Let sin be expunged, and it will close as it commenced, in Paradise and Eden, when all was blessedness and joy. This earth is, in all likelihood, to undergo the same process that our bodies undergo. Every body becomes a lifeless form; it must be laid in the grave, the worm must be its brother, and corruption must be its sister; but out of its disintegrated elements God will construct, not another body, but the same identical body without an atom of sin, or disease, or decay. So it will be with this world. God will not destroy it and substitute another in its place. He will re-baptize it with fire, and pass over it a new genesis, and that which is now groaning with the burden of sin, like a mother weeping at the sufferings of her offspring, will rise regenerated under the rays of the "Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings." I was never made to die, we were never made to have grey hairs, or pain in the heart, or disease in the frame. Sin was introduced into the world, and death by sin. God made us at first holy, perfect, and happy, and till sin be removed, and not till then, can man be holy, beautiful, and happy again. If you take a man in full health, (though scarcely possible, for the instant a babe is born, that instant it begins to die,) at thirty or

forty, in the prime of life, without disease, and if he could be laid open, and an angel were to see him, not knowing the history of humanity, he would infer from the anatomy, that a machine so exquisitely made, the arrangements for waste and supply so perfect, must go on for ever, and ever, and ever; and if you ask the philosopher why this man dies and grows old, he cannot tell you; there is no reason upon earth why you or I should grow old. It is a mysterious poison that has crept into our economy, and generated disease and death. Let sin be expunged, remove the moral disease incubating in the heart of man, and he will be restored to a state of holiness, happiness and health again.

Many hold that Christ comes at the death of a Christian. I do not think so; he does not then come to me, I go to him. He sends for me, not comes to me, and, therefore, to say that Christ comes at death, is a misconstruing of the texts foretelling his coming. The Scriptures represent that when Christ comes, instead of finding a millennial earth, filled with happiness, and peace, and joy, he shall find disorganisation, wickedness, and guilt. Does not this teach us that instead of the millennium preceding Christ's advent, men will be busily engaged, some in things sinful, and others in what is innocent in itself, but absorbing in its influences? Many things are sinful only in excess. The love of money, for instance, is a legitimate passion in its subordinate place. We cannot do

without money; we cannot do without clothes, and food, and therefore not without money; when we love it in its place we do right, but when it becomes the commanding passion it is most destructive. So you may love the bright flowers, and beautiful landscape, this is all perfectly legitimate; the sin consists in the abuse, or in making the love of the object the commanding passion. I believe that the excessive love of what is lawful ruins more souls than the forbidden love of what is sinful. We have in the Scriptures a parable which divides those who reject the Gospel of Christ into three classes: one said—"I have bought a yoke of oxen, and must needs go to prove them." Now there was no sin in buying the oxen, but the sin was in loving them so much, that the invitation of Christ was rejected. In the other case also, there was no sin in marrying, but in paying so much attention to the home, the wife, and the fireside, that no time could be sacrificed to obey Christ's gracious invitation. So also in the last day, it will not be so much that men will be engaged in wickedness, as immersed in the inordinate love of things lawful. Just before Christ's coming we may expect that Satan will go forth with intense activity. Everything that is evil will become charged with double intensity. Is not everything already becoming more and more earnest? Popery is intensely active; Puseyism is just the old fox-hunting, sporting clergyman becoming earnest. Look at infidelity, how it is exerting itself! Look at our

divisions, how sad! Nevertheless, I believe there is at this moment in the church of Christ universal, more healthy, real evangelical religion than there ever has been since the days of the Reformation. In the Church of England, with all its division, there is a body of devout, spiritual-minded men, that have no precedent in any other church. I rejoice that it is so. I think everything is becoming earnest and real; and as the coming of Christ nears, all men will be in earnest, either in God's or the devil's service. As the time is short, so Satan knows it. He is aware that he has but few years in which to exercise his power in this world, and he will strive the more to obtain a foot-hold in a globe that is escaping from his clutches; and if he cannot secure the position he covets, he will try to victimize and make captives of all that he can. Look at the political world. What is the state of Europe at the present time? It is one surging volcano. Look at China, seething in revolution. See France, trembling for its imperial destinies. Look at Russia — already come, probably the ancient Magog, into Europe, and to fight his last battle in the midst of Palestine before the end comes. Look at Turkey — prophecy pointing to this time as the probable period when the Euphrates is to be dried up. Look at Rome, which at this very moment would not contain the Pope ten minutes, if it were not for the 6,000 French soldiers there: a third of the population of Rome are Protestants religiously, if they dare avow it; and

another third are radicals and revolutionists, ready to upset the present state of things if they could. And this is the model city! the modern Rome; that ought to present a magnificent spectacle of unity and peace: where the Pope, its sovereign, would not be secure ten minutes, if the 6,000 French bayonets were to be withdrawn. The Thirty-nine Articles are surely as good as these to keep a nation in its place any day. The cities of the nations are also predicted to fall. Now I believe that as "the great city" was the politico-ecclesiastical institution of the Church of Rome, the cities of the nations are our established churches. I do not say I wish them to fall; I have no sympathy with those who try to subvert them; for I believe, in my conscience, a national church to be a great ordinance of God, and that it is duty to maintain and support it; but too plainly the Church of England, as an ecclesiastical institution, trembles on the very verge of its disorganization. The Church of Scotland suffered a great expenditure of its strength in 1843, when a number of excellent men supposed it their duty to secede from it; both churches are at this moment weakened considerably, and I believe, as civil and endowed institutions, they will be wickedly but hopelessly broken up. All churches are about to be equally dissolved; Methodism is fast breaking up; Independency is to be shattered; and the Baptists will not be spared. This great disorganization of existing institutions is the disintegration of the component elements, in

order to form a new and glorious combination — a church where there shall be no more division, where there shall be neither Churchmen nor Dissenters, but Christ and Christian shall be all in all.

I have thus shown, first, that Christ's advent is the prominent hope of the Church of God; secondly, that his advent is a personal one; and, thirdly, that the millennial day succeeds, and does not precede, the advent of Christ, just as the light follows the sun, and does not precede it; and, lastly, I have shown from the signs of the times, that this advent is near at hand, and that it becomes all to make ready for the coming of our blessed Lord. Let us now look more earnestly for the appearing of the Son of God, and cease to quarrel. When our Lord comes, there will instantly take place a resurrection of the dead in Christ. I am going to state what some will not agree with. I hold that when Christ comes at the commencement of the millennium, all believers that have died in Christ — from Adam down to the babe that perished yesterday from its mother's bosom — the dead in Christ will instantly rise. All believers then living will instantly be gathered together with them — and both the dead in Christ who rise from the earth, and the living in Christ who do not die, but are changed, shall be caught up in the air, and shall there remain until the earth has undergone the last fiery baptism, just as the family of Noah was kept in the ark. The rest of the dead will not rise until the thousand years are finished. The resurrection

of the dead in Christ, that is, of all true believers, takes place at the commencement of the millennium; and if so, by this one fact it is established, that Christ's advent is pre-millennial, and not post-millennial. We read in the 20th chapter of the Revelation,—"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or on their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until a thousand years were finished." Some hold that the first resurrection that takes place at the commencement of the millennium is a spiritual or figurative resurrection, and not a personal one. Both Mr. Barnes and Mr. Brown hold this view, and quote prophecy in support of it, as, for instance, the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, where we read,—"Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God:

Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." In the same manner there is a similar prophecy in Hosea, where the resurrection is spoken of, at the 6th chapter and the 2d verse, where we read,—"After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Now, Mr. Barnes rests upon this as a proof that the rising of the dead spoken of in the 20th chapter of the Revelation is used in a figurative sense. My answer to him would be this:—The death and resurrection spoken of in the prophecies quoted, are expressly stated to be figurative. In Ezekiel the death is figurative, and therefore the resurrection is so; but the death in the Apocalypse is literal, and therefore the resurrection is so also. For if the death be literal, as it undoubtedly is, then the resurrection must be literal also. But again, it is said that the rest of the dead live not until the thousand years are finished. This is universally conceded to be literal, but the first resurrection is part of it; therefore these resurrections must be both literal. Our Lord when he speaks of the seven candlesticks adds their meaning, "The seven candlesticks which thou seest are, *i. e.* represent, the seven churches." So this is, *i. e.* explains, the first resurrection. Throughout the New Testament we read of two resurrections. In Luke xiv. 14 we read,—"For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Again, in Luke xx. 35,—"But they

which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," or, as it ought to have been translated, that we should be counted worthy of obtaining that, *i. e.* pre-eminent resurrection from among the dead. St. Paul says, —"If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead," or, as it should read, "from among the dead." There can be no doubt that there are two resurrections spoken of, and that the resurrection of the saints is the first and previous to the millennium, and the resurrection that is last is after the millennium. In Romans viii. we have a beautiful illustrative passage,—"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting the redemption of the body" as its restoration. The Apostle speaks of nature groaning and travailing in pain, waiting till she brings forth that new and beautiful heaven,—"the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." We have no idea now, I may remark, of the stores of beauty and magnificence treasured up in the bosom of this earth. You would hardly believe that the different varieties of roses are merely the old hedge rose subjected to artistic cultivation; and if man can bring forth by his skill such magnificent objects from nature, how beautiful will nature's roses and blossoms be when the repressing curse under which all nature is groaning and travailing shall be removed!

When Christ comes, then shall be realized the

prophecy of the woman's seed as the destroyer of the serpent. Christ came into the world not to destroy the works of God, but to destroy the works of the devil, as it is so beautifully expressed in one of the Collects in the Prayer-Book: "O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen." When Christ comes Satan's head shall be finally bruised, and he shall no longer trample or triumph over this world. The triumphs of Messiah shall be fully realized, when he shall present to his Father a glorious and complete church, without spot or blemish or any such thing. His promises with regard to his own peculiar people, the Jews, shall then be accomplished, for they shall be restored to their own land. When Christ comes we shall meet all that fell asleep in Christ, all that believe with us in him as our Prophet, Priest, and King. We shall be raised, and you, dear reader, shall know me, and I shall know you, more distinctly than we now recognise each other. It will be the general assembly of the church of the First-born, sitting down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, know-

ing each other even as they also are known. We who have lost dear relatives shall have them restored to us, and all painful disruptions shall be healed; and we who have wept here on earth shall rejoice in joining with our friends in singing the praises of the Lamb for ever and ever. When Christ comes, this earth, which is now an island struck off from the continent of glory, shall be restored to its proper place from which it was originally broken, and God shall be with men, and dwell with us, and we shall dwell with him for ever. Then there shall be "no more tears, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." There shall be no more death, no night, no mistakes, no heart-burnings, no griefs to feel, nor fears to beat away. There will then and there begin the lasting reign of perfect holiness, and therefore of perfect happiness; we shall see no more of the presence or the power of corruption; we shall rise no more clothed with corruptible flesh and blood, but endued with bodies incorruptible, immortal, and radiant with glory; and then shall be brought to pass the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

But for a full and joyous view of all the future glory, we must refer to those magnificent sketches, the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation. There we find the sure prophecy of the removal of all that disturbs, and the introduction of all that glorifies. The sorrows and the imperfections of the present are there seen retiring like

clouds, and the full sunshine of everlasting day pouring down upon a restored and regenerated earth. All old things are passed away, and all things are become new. The sorrows of the past are merged in the enjoyments of an everlasting present. Recollections of scenes and events once painful, will serve to augment the joys, and heighten the bliss of an experience that accumulates in peace, and joy, and brilliancy for ever. The Christian has a noble destiny before him, and a blessed hope within him; his is a goodly heritage; his is a hope that maketh not ashamed. The future, in its relation to the present, will be absolute contrast, not comparison. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, its deep things.

"No sickness there;
No weary wasting of the frame away;
No fearful shrinking from the midnight air;
No dread of summer's bright and fervid ray.

"Care has no home
Within that realm of ceaseless praise and song;
Its tossing billows break and melt in foam,
Far from the mansions of the spirit throng.

"No wither'd flower,
Or blasted bud, celestial gardens know;
No scorching blast, or fierce descending shower,
Scatters destruction like a ruthless foe.

"No hidden grief,
No wild and cheerless vision of despair,
No vain petitions for a swift relief,
No tearful eyes, no broken hearts are there."

IV.

THE JEW, HIS RUIN AND RESTORATION.

THE prophecies in the Gospels relating to the Jews are signs in every century of this dispensation. But the hopes that begin to bud from every branch of this withered fig-tree are indications of its returning vitality, and of our arrival at the eve of a new dispensation. We have said something about the recent movement among the Jews in the first Lecture. Let us retrace their ruin, so soon to end in their restoration. Jesus said, eighteen hundred years ago, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24.

There is here stated the prophecy of the utter dispersion, degradation, and protracted suffering of the Jew, in all the nations and countries of the earth. There is also predicted no less clearly what has been actually fulfilled, — the entire desolation of their illustrious capital, the overthrow of their holy temple, and so far the removal of that central column, the glory and rallying-place of the Jew, to which, with unfaltering fidelity, he still looks from every land, and along every age of the world.

Let us study the prediction of the utter downfall of the illustrious capital, its sacred temple, and all the glory of that place that was once the joy of the whole earth. The destruction of Jerusalem took place, as predicted in the sacred page, and recorded in the annals of the Jewish historian, eighteen hundred years ago. Titus, the Roman general, pitched his camp amid the ruins of the temple, on the very spot where the mercy-seat and the ark, and the glory and the cherubim were, in the year of our Lord 70; and of all the worshippers that were wont to congregate under the roof of that magnificent fane, Josephus states that there were left on its site, in his days, a handful of old and venerable rabbis, who wept, and prayed, and kissed the very stones and ruins of their loved and now lost temple. In the year of our Lord 138, by order of the Roman emperor Adrian, there was set up, in order to insult the Jews, a marble hog, the unclean animal always thought by the Gentiles most obnoxious to the Jews; and in order effectually to disperse the Jews, as if he undertook to fulfil the prophecy, and leave them not the least discernible trace of the site of their city, he ordered it to be again ploughed up, and another city to be built upon its ruins called by another name. For a great many years the very name Jerusalem was not applied to the town that stood upon the ruins of the ancient city and royal home of David. It is even doubtful at this moment if the walls and houses in Jerusalem contain, in a single instance, a solitary

fragment of the ancient walls and houses of Salem. The only remains that we can trace, as probably a part of its ancient glory, are the deep foundations of a temple, near where a Christian sanctuary is built, consisting of huge stones of enormous dimensions buried in the *débris;* the corners of which are literally worn and wasted by the lips of the rabbis, that come on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and still kiss the stones of their ancient temple. In their deepest degradation "her people take pleasure in her stones; her very dust to them is dear." The mosque of Omar was subsequently erected by the Mahometans, on what they supposed the site of the ancient temple: and during the Crusades, when the nations that denied a living Christ rushed to rescue the tomb of a dead Christ, the streets of Jerusalem were literally deluged with blood; and since that day the hoofs of the Arab's steed, the Mameluke cavalry, and the bare feet of the Greek and Roman monk have continued to tread the streets of Jerusalem, and to desecrate the dust of Abraham and Sarah beneath the oaks of Mamre; and the bones of Joseph resting in the hopes of a sure and a certain resurrection. And whilst all these insults have been inflicted on Jerusalem for a very long course of years, the Jew has not been suffered to live in it: in his own city the Jew is now literally the stranger. All religions — Greek, Roman, and Mahometan—have united for eighteen hundred years in keeping the Jew out of Jerusalem, as predicted in the prophets; and the Jews at

this day present the spectacle of a people without a home—a nation without a country. It has only been during the last thirty years (and here is the budding of the fig-tree) that any number of Jews have been allowed to live in Jerusalem, and to begin to find homes and raise houses in the midst of it, and to walk again the streets consecrated by the feet of illustrious pilgrims, and to breathe the air that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the world's grey fathers breathed many thousand years before.

Not only has their capital been thus destroyed, but in every country to which the Jew has been driven, he continues a sufferer. In Switzerland, the land of freedom, and of mountain and of glen, the Jew has drunk the bitter cup of sorrow. In Russia he is treated as a serf; and when the autocrat wants to augment his army, or to indulge his taste, it is the wretched but rich Jews that must pay the price and bear the penalty of it. In Spain he is hunted like a wild beast. In Italy, and chiefly in Rome, he is driven into a horrid den called the *ghetto:* the only respite that he enjoyed was when the Roman republic was in force; and naturally he longs and waits for that day when the ecclesiastical despotism that now crushes him shall be broken into fragments, and Israel shall again be free, and Christians have liberty to worship God, with none to make them afraid. The Jew reads the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy in his synagogues, and feels too keenly that every curse predicted against

him in that chapter has been literally executed. No sign is so eloquent as the Jew on our streets.

I turn from the capital and its inhabitants to the country itself—to Palestine. What is its state now? Once it was a land that overflowed with milk and with honey; its gardens rising in successive tiers into every zone and climate. On the mountain ranges of Lebanon grew the fruits of every country, and of every latitude of the globe. It was once the most fertile and prolific of all lands, as it is still the most beautifully situated. But since the fall of Jerusalem what has been its state? The earthquake has its home in Palestine; the very sea —the Mediterranean—ebbs from its shores, as if it felt weary with touching them. Its cities are become tombs; its population is drying up; the Arab plunderer roams in every valley; its once beautiful trees and tiers of gardens have been washed by the rains till the bare rock is all that remains; the eagle screams amid its solitary recesses, and the owl hoots in its wild and desolate parts. Palestine is at this moment an illustration and specimen of a land that God Almighty has cursed, a desert attesting the truth of God's word, yet pregnant with a glorious Eden. Chateaubriand, the celebrated French traveller, and not at all disposed towards the view that we take of the destiny of the Jews and the hopes of Jerusalem, thus speaks of it:—

"This portion of the country is so shockingly barren, that it does not even possess the semblance

of a bit of moss. One can only discover here and there some tufts of thorny plants, as pale as the soil that produced them, and covered with dust, like the trees on the sides of our highways during summer. The mountains present the same appearance, clothed in white dust, without a shade, without a tree, destitute of herbage, and not even possessing a scrap of moss. If I should live a thousand years I never can forget that desert (where Jerusalem first appeared), and which seemed still inspired with the majesty of Jehovah, and the frightful terrors of death. The country, which up to this moment had still preserved something like verdure, now became barren. The sides of the mountains expanded, and assumed a more sterile and sublime appearance. Soon after all vegetation disappeared, not a blade of grass could be discerned. The amphitheatre of mountains was then tinted as with a red and burning colour. We travelled laboriously for an hour amid these mournful regions, to attain the summit of a hill at a distance before us. Arriving here, we rode for another hour upon an elevated and naked plain, sown as it were with rounded masses of stone. Suddenly, at the extremity of this plain, I perceived a line of gothic walls flanked with square towers, enclosing apparently the roofs of some buildings. At the foot of these walls appeared a camp of Turkish cavalry in all their oriental pomp. The guide exclaimed, 'Behold the holy city! Behold Jerusalem!' We perceived Jerusalem through an opening in the

mountains. I did not at first know what it was, as I believed it to be only a mass of shattered rocks. The sudden apparition of this city of desolations in the midst of such wasted solitudes had something about it altogether fearful. She was there indeed, the queen of the desert. When a traveller enters into Judea, a great lassitude rises upon the spirits. But when in passing from one solitude to another, and space stretches in limitless expanse around, by degrees this weight on his mind is removed, and a sacred awe is felt, which, far from depressing the soul, gives a fortitude to, and elevates the powers of the mind. The most extraordinary forms of objects declare it to be on all sides a country which has groaned under miracles. The burning sun, the fierce eagle, the barren fig-tree, all the poetry and all the painting of the Scripture are here. Every local name retains within it some mystery, every cavern speaks of futurity, each rocky height reverberates the accents of some prophecy. God himself has spoken within its borders. The wasted rivers, the cloven rocks, the yawning tombs attest the prodigy. The desert seems still stricken dumb with terror, and as if it had not yet dared to break that silence which was felt when the voice of the Eternal had been heard. Those who come as strange Jews to live in Jerusalem live but a short time. And those who are in Palestine are so poor as to be obliged every year to send a begging mission for alms, amongst their brethren in Egypt and Barbary. The surrounding country is frightful.

On every side are naked mountains, of rounded summits or terminating in broad plains; whilst many of them, at greater distances, assume the appearance of ruined castles or mosques. These mountains are not so wedged together as not to present intervals through which the spectator beholds other scenes; but by these openings you only can discover plains covered with rocks like those which are immediately in front."

He thus describes the valley of Sodom: "The valley contained within these two chains of mountains looks, in its soil, like the bottom of a sea, from which the water had for a length of time receded, made up of long reaches of salt, an expanse of dried mud, and shifting beds, furrowed as it were by the waves. Here and there wretched shrubs grow with difficulty in a soil deprived of vitality; their leaves are enervated with the salt which has nourished them, and their bark has the smell and taste of smoke. Instead of villages, the ruins of a few towers are perceived. Through the body of the valley a discoloured river flows, and moves slowly and with painful regret towards that pestiferous lake in which it is utterly lost. Its course is alone distinguished, in the midst of the sand, by the reeds and willows which grow on its margin; whilst the Arab conceals himself amongst these reeds to attack the traveller and plunder the pilgrim. Such is the river Jordan! And this lake is the Dead Sea. It appears to sparkle; but the guilty towns concealed in its bosom have

poisoned its waters. The solitary depths afford a home to scarcely any living creature,— no vessel (until lately) has ever floated on its waves; its banks are without birds, without trees; have no green herbage; and its water, painfully bitter to the taste, is so heavy that the most violent winds are scarcely able to produce any agitation on its surface. A crust of salt covers the sand of the valley, and looks like a field of snow, from whence spring some few disjointed shrubs. Places held sacred by both Jew and Mahometan, are now the resort of wild beasts and robbers. Fear attends the traveller, and he marches through them in haste and trepidation, with his fire-arms loaded, and his life in his hand."

Such is Chateaubriand's description of Palestine as it now is. We ask, if the words of the traveller thus acquainted personally with Jerusalem be not the very echo of the prophecy pronounced by our Lord eighteen hundred years ago? Literally, the house of the Jew has been left unto him desolate; literally, one stone does not stand upon another of his illustrious Temple; and literally, that land which Moses beheld from Mount Pisgah, and which was admired as the beauty and the joy of the earth, the garden of the world, is now such as it has been described by the traveller whose words I have read —a bleak desert, the haunt of the robber, the home of the Arab and the Ishmaelite, whose hand is against every man. It has one feature only that redeems its awful desolation. It is covered with

prophetic indications of an approaching glory, when Jerusalem shall again be the world's metropolis, and Palestine once more a land overflowing with milk and with honey.

Whilst Jerusalem is thus laid low, and trodden by the hoof of the Mameluke and the naked foot of the monk, it is however reserved for a day of restoration spoken of contemporaneous with the fulness of the times of the Gentiles. It shall be trodden under foot, but not for ever,—"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

In the prophecy of Micah, at the 12th verse of the 3d chapter, there is first narrated the desolation of Jerusalem: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." Then notice what follows in the next verse,—or the 1st verse of the 4th chapter: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain"—what mountain? the mountain of Jerusalem—"of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And when shall this be? It shall be when "Christ shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations

afar off: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." Here we find a clear and irresistible prediction of the restoration of Jerusalem as the queen of capitals, the glory and the beauty of the whole earth; and we, who now treat the Jew with scorn, use his name as a by-word to point a tale, or give interest to a play, shall then be so exalted by the moral magnificence of his restoration, that we shall go from afar up to Jerusalem, to worship and hear the praise of Him who there was crucified, but then glorified there as our God, by Jew and Gentile, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

Zechariah, in his 8th chapter, says, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If it be marvellous in the

eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." These words were written by Zechariah, not during the captivity in Babylon, when one might possibly say that the restoration to their own country was something like a portion of the fulfilment of it. This was predicted by Zechariah after the restoration, and in relation to a future and an unfulfilled restoration, when the Jew shall be carried on the shoulders of the Gentiles, — our locomotives shall carry them, and our money shall be expended in doing it. I have this hope of our native land, that England, or, as I must now, as my countrymen correct me, say Britain, shall play the most illustrious part in the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and in establishing them in the country where their fathers dwelt before them.

The Jews therefore will go to Jerusalem before their conversion, build their temple, revive the sacrifices of Levi; and in the midst of all, their minds will be enlightened, and their hearts will be converted to the Lord.

The time when this shall take place is called "when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." As preparatory to this, we may expect, as an inci-

pient sign of the approaching restoration, what is called the budding of the fig-tree. We have seen that it has been during the last thirty years only that the Jew has been suffered to live within the walls of the city of his fathers. This is a movement in the direction of their fulness. Among the Jews themselves there is now a movement, and an impulse unpredecented in depth, intensity, and spread. "They," says Zechariah, "shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children and turn again." Then he represents them very strikingly: "They shall call upon me, and I will hear them; and I will say, It is my people." How exquisitely beautiful is that! "They shall call upon me;" and as if I had just discovered them that had been buried amid the nations of the earth, I will instantly, when I hear their cry, look down upon the petitioners, and I will exclaim, in a burst of joy, "This is my people." The Jews at this moment are less immersed in Rabbinism than they ever were. The Rabbinism of the Jew is the Popery of the Christian; but their ablest minds are becoming detached from it more and more: a spirit of inquiry grows among them, as their newspapers indicate, such as has never been before. Their hearts at this moment are beating more intensely towards Jerusalem; and their desire for political power in this country is only indicative of their thirst for power and political supremacy, where it is their everlasting right. And should they obtain that power amid the nations of the Gentiles

which they desire, it will only stimulate their appetite for their true nationality and restoration to Palestine, and citizenship in Jerusalem. Hence Isaiah says, "They shall come from the four corners of the earth;" and again, "They shall flee on the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west," as if large companies of Jews were in the east. "They shall come from the land of Sin"—that is, the land of China. It is not impossible that the Ten Tribes may be scattered amid the Chinese at this moment; and, contemporaneous with the drying up of the Euphrates in the East, and the disorganization of the Chinese empire, that vast and hitherto impenetrable territory, may be the breaking up of the nations of the earth, in order that the imprisoned captives of Israel may begin their homeward march from the Danube, and from the borders of the Euphrates, and from every land, east and west, encouraged and borne by us to their native home, where, in their own sweet sunshine, and upon their own consecrated hills, they shall worship the Prince, the Messiah.

There is clearly predicted, in ancient prophecies, a movement amid the nations of the earth preparatory to this. "Since thou," says God, in Isaiah xliii., speaking to the Jews, "wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to

the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth."

These words are quoted on missionary platforms, as if they meant the conversion of the Gentiles. Very often the Jews get most unfair treatment on Gentile platforms. We take all that is good from every prophecy, and say, "This is ours;" and all the calamity we hand over to the Jew, and we say, "That is yours." We eat the sweet kernel; we throw to the miserable Jew the shells and husks. But if you read Isaiah, not after the headings given by our translators, you will see that its most brilliant predictions relate primarily to the Jews, though our glory is always associated with their restoration and approaching grandeur. So again in Isaiah lx. —"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls:"—what walls? the walls of Jerusalem—"and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought." We may expect that the nations of the earth will begin, on the eve of that movement among the Jews, to discuss in

their cabinets the restoration of the Jews. There are books recently written, which urge on the nations to help them to their own land. The Jews in London are collecting money in order to purchase Palestine at this moment: the Jews in America have collected enormous sums to build the temple again in Jerusalem. All these things are signs of the times, and indications of the approaching change.

When the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, this restoration takes place. What are those times? As soon as the last believer has been gathered from the mass of the nations of the earth, and added to the company of the church of the redeemed, the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled. As soon as the Gospel has been preached, not to convert all nations, but as a witness to all nations, and the inhabitants around the Pole have been brought within its sound, then the time of the end is at hand. As soon as Mahometanism expires, the Crescent wanes, and the mosque of the Moslem resounds with the praises of the God of Abraham, the times of the Gentiles will have come to a close. As soon as the great Antichrist shall be overthrown, and Babylon shall sink like a millstone in the mighty deep, the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled. And then the dry bones on a thousand hills — the bones of scattered Israel — shall be clothed with flesh, and become an army of living men. "If," says the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans, "the fall of the Jews be the riches of the

world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!" When the Gentile nations shall see a whole people begin their march from the east and from the west, in more majestic exodus than that of their forefathers from Egypt to Palestine, then will come to pass what the apostle predicts — that the Gentiles, seeing the stupendous spectacle, startled by its splendour and magnificence, will recognise the truth they have repudiated, and nations be born in a day. "And," says the Apostle, "we would not have you ignorant, brethren, that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." When restored to their land, Zachariah tells us in his 12th chapter, "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced" — Christ manifested to them — "and they shall mourn." The prophecy of Zachariah implies that they shall be in their own land when they shall thus repent. "The land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart, the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart" — implying that they are settled in cities and sections of their own Palestine, enjoying political power and government in the midst of it;

and that then and there Christ shall be revealed to them — the Gospel accepted by them — and where once they shouted, "Crucify him!" they shall shout "Hosanna!" till the echoes of their songs reverberate from west to east, and from earth to heaven, and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the God of Israel.

The Jew is now a reluctant witness to the truth of the New Testament. Their long resistance of its claims is one of its credentials. But one day, probably very soon, they will appear its glad advocates. The only thing wanting to complete the Jew's testimony to the inspiration of evangelists and apostles is his conversion. When that earnestly prayed-for era comes, the grandest sign of the times will startle the world, as of the striking of one of the great epochal hours of time.

V.

NOAH, HIS AGE AND OURS.

We enter here on one of the great parallelisms of time. The coincidences we discover between the age of Noah and the nineteenth century are significant signs. They are proofs of the earth's old age, and yet foretokens of its predicted youth. Our Lord says, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Luke xvii. 26–29.

History, whether sacred or profane, seems always to repeat itself. One great era in the world appears, when narrowly examined, to be simply the reflection of another; and a deed done in the day that now is, to be the echo of a deed done hundreds or thousands of years ago. Time seems to move in circles, history constantly to repeat itself, and so far to illustrate the maxim of the wise man, "There is nothing new under the sun." When we examine

great and startling epochs in the history of the world, we find points of contact, analogies, and coincidences most suggestive. The deluge, the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of this age, all seem to have coincident points, running, like sea and land, into each other.

The age of Noah is a prefiguration of the age that now is, — the last great epoch of this world's life. History is never obsolete. He that knows best the history of the past, humanly speaking, will be the truest prophet of the character of the future. Some one made the remark in scorn, "History is an old almanack:" he stated a great truth, though he did not intend it. How does the almanack of this year differ from the almanack of the last? The dates differ slightly, but the acts are the same, the tides the same, the same rising and setting of the sun, summer and winter, spring and autumn. History is an old almanack; it is the same great drama, only with different actors, and slight changes in the parts that they play. If you take the events of the last two thousand years, and compare them with the events of the four thousand that preceded, you will be struck by the number of beautiful and interesting coincidences. The study of Genesis is a preparation for the study of the Apocalypse. Acquaintance with Leviticus is a ground-work for acquaintance with the Gospel according to St. John. The history of humanity in the desert is a type and prefiguration of humanity in the age in which our lot is now cast.

Human nature, as far as disconnected with the Gospel, and uninfluenced by its elements, is the same in the days of Napoleon that it was in the days of Noah. The nineteenth century from creation, and the nineteenth century from redemption, in which we live, are very much fac-similes the one of the other; and where the difference is visible, that difference is the result of the touch of transforming grace, not the inherent attainment or development of original excellence in human nature.

Jesus, in his assertion of parallelism, recognises Genesis as Scripture. It is worth while to notice these points: because, admit the New Testament to be divine, and you cannot escape the conclusion that the Old is equally so; because the writers and speakers in the New quote the sentiments of the writers of the Old. Jesus quotes Genesis as true history. You are aware the Rationalists in Germany — called Rationalists, as they think themselves, from excess of reason, just as *lucus*, from *lux*, light, is the Latin for a grove, from its *non lucendo*, from its having no light; so these men are called Rationalists, because they have no reason — say that the tower of Babel, and Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees, and the flood, are myths—that is, fables. They say it was not a real history, but a fable, just as the parable of the Prodigal Son, or the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. But here our blessed Lord refers to Noah as a real person, to the flood as a fact, to the characteristics of

that generation as types and prefigurations of the characteristics of ours; and in all respects he attests the authenticity of Genesis, the reality of its history; and that if Rationalists proclaim it to be a myth, the Way, the Truth, and the Life has anticipated them, by pronouncing it sacred and instructive history.

The prophecy, however, that we are now to consider is, that men shall be at the close of this age just as they were at the close of the antediluvian age. But what was the character of the people at the time of the flood? and by finding the sketch of them, as given by the inspired pencil, we shall be able to ascertain what shall be the character of those who shall live immediately before our Lord's coming. The condition and character of the world in the days of Noah are thus described:—"And it came to pass, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. There were giants in the earth in those days. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way

upon the earth." Here is the portrait; not drawn by an inaccurate pen, but by the faithful historian, who was inspired by the Spirit of God to sketch it truly, and to set down nothing that was false. We may expect, then, that the next generation will be something like a reflection of this first. We are told that in the days of Noah the heart of man was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. And is the natural heart improved now? There is no evidence that it is. Sins as grievous, crimes as flagrant, emanate from the unsanctified and unregenerate heart now as ever emanated from it in the days of Noah. We may be more civilized than they were in Noah's days, but not more sanctified: we may have more science, but we may not have more grace. If God's Word speaks intelligibly it speaks pointedly, that out of the heart proceed all evil thoughts, appetites and desires, until that heart is sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God. It is a great mistake to think that education without religion makes man's heart one whit holier. We do not fear education in science; we only contend that it is not sufficient to make man holy, or to make him happy hereafter. In fact, education without religion does man so far good—that it tends to civilize him; but it does not one whit sanctify him: it needs the element of religion to accomplish that; and because we say mere secular education is not sufficient, we do not say it is not in itself good; however, all it can do is to improve man as an inhabitant of this world; it cannot fit man for being

an inhabitant of a higher. If I carry filings of steel from a muddy street to a beautiful walk, or to a lovely garden, I make an improvement in their condition; but if I take a magnet and apply it to them, I give them another motion altogether, and lift them not horizontally, but vertically from the earth. Secular education lifts man from degradation unto social civilization; but it is only a change of locality on the earth; it is a horizontal change; but grace touches him with its magnetic attraction, and draws him, not from one part of the earth to another; but from the earth to heaven, from grace to glory, closer and nearer to God.

The heart of man is not one whit changed in its inherent nature from what it was in the days of Noah and immediately before the flood. David said it was the same in his days that it was in those of Noah; and faithful history records the crimes that have found their origin in the heart, and stained the annals of the fairest realms of Europe.

It is also written, that in the days of Noah the earth was filled with violence, that is, war, conflict, revolt, dispute. And are we very much wiser now? It was predicted by the great advocates, not of peace, but of the Peace Society, some years ago, that now war had become an obsolete thing, that all our shot should at once be made into rails, that our cannon should be turned into locomotives, our muskets sold as old iron, and our ships as fire-wood, and in fact, that a mere pretence of a guard was all that we wanted on the shores of England, and

that Europe had learned enough of war up to 1814 to shrink from it for ever. Had these men recollected that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man cometh, they would have paused before they prophesied so badly. What better testimony can we have to what man is capable of, than that the very people who shed torrents of blood, and committed the awful deeds of 1793, did things, if possible, more awful in 1848? And at this present moment all Europe is one vast volcano, waiting for the match to be applied to explode into a thousand fragments. What is now taking place upon the Danube, whether it be the fanatic Sultan or the ambitious Czar that is to blame, is evidence that all Europe, notwithstanding the benevolent and dutiful attempts of statesmen to avert it, is plunging more and more into one vast and devastating war. We are just upon the verge of the utter waning of the Crescent. And while that Crescent wanes, the old Eastern churches that are now under the Mahometan power are becoming more enlightened, more desirous of God's Word, more willing to listen to faithful preaching by the missionaries of the Cross; and a people, enlightened by the Bible, are ready to take the place of a people degraded by the Koran, preparatory to that moment when the Jews, the kings from the sun-rising, shall move homeward to their own land, repossess it, and look for him in glory who will come and reveal himself as the Messiah, and they shall mourn every tribe apart, and be in

bitterness as one is in bitterness for his own first-born.

Notwithstanding all prophecies of peace, the nations are at this moment as ready for war as ever. This seems very strange; it only shows that men are not yet tired of war, and that until the Prince of Peace shall sway his sceptre over a transformed world, there may be "Peace, peace"—the calm, the quiet—but not the permanent peace that keeps the heart and mind continually.

In the days of Noah, not only was the earth filled with violence, so that we may expect the same violence to be exhibited again; but out of all that vast population there were only eight persons that obeyed God's word, that worshipped the true God, and honoured him. Far be it from me to pronounce where to pray is duty; but is it not fact, at this moment, that if you take Christendom at large, you cannot say that the majority are Christians; you cannot say that the majority of the professing Church are true, spiritually-minded Christians? It is still true that "broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat;" and "narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." As "it was in the days of Noah"—that the overwhelming majority were opposed to the truth, and enamoured of a lie—so previous to Christ's second advent in the bursting cloud that reveals the lightning in its splendour, and ushers in the Lord of glory, the

great multitude will be without God, and without Christ, and without hope in the world.

Another feature of the men in the days of Noah was their intense worldliness. They were eating, drinking, marrying wives, and giving in marriage. Now there was no sin in any of these. It was not sinful, but dutiful to eat and drink, if they did so in moderation; it was lawful to marry then, as it is lawful and dutiful to marry now, ever remembering the grand modifying law that gives it all its consistency and its beauty: "Let them that marry be as though they married not; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that use the world as not abusing it, knowing that the fashion of it speedily passeth away." What was the sin of the antediluvians in eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage? It was the excessive love of the lawful which corrupted them, as truly as their constant indulgence in the sinful. Never forget the danger we are in in loving to excess what is lawful, as well as in practising that which is forbidden; and there is probably more peril in the excessive love of the lawful than there is in the forbidden practice of the sinful. More men lose their souls by being absorbed in practices that are in themselves unexceptionable, than in practices that are positively sinful and forbidden. The world then was their temple; indulgence of the appetites was their delight; the gratification of the flesh was their enjoyment. They were the slaves of appetite,

the servants of the world. This world was their all; they made the most of it—"Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." But on the supposition that there is a world beyond it, where the deeds of the present have their echo in the retributions of the future, their conduct was disobedient in the extreme. Now it will be so at the end of this dispensation. Men will eat and drink, and marry and give in marriage, and they will think nothing of the future. While it is their privilege and their duty to trade, they will not simply be in the world—where God has placed them—but they will be of the world, where Christians ought not to be. And the reason of this was, that they were in those days atheists, or they lived without God. Now an atheist we shrink from in horror, and very justly. I cannot conceive a rational being with one ounce of common sense to come to the conclusion that there is not a God who made and governs this present world. The thing seems so absurd, that the man who could arrive at such a conclusion seems only fit to be the inmate of a lunatic asylum. The Psalmist's statement, "men that say, No God," does not mean that in David's days they were so foolish, as to conclude logically, "no God." If it were written, not in the Hebrew, but in Greek, it would have been in the optative mood. "The fool hath said in his heart," not "There is no God;" but, "*I wish there was* no God." He cannot avoid the logical conclusion that there is a God; but he wishes that he could

continue in his sins, and feel that there were no God to see him or to call him to account. The spirit of atheism may be where there is a perfect horror of the idea of an atheist. The man who explains every phenomenon without God, who sees nature's laws, but cannot see beyond them nature's Lawgiver, who accounts for every occurrence, prosperous or adverse, painful or pleasant, retribution or blessing, without God, may theoretically be no atheist, but practically he is so. He is an atheist who looks on everything, and thinks of everything practically on the hypothesis that there is no God. He enters on to-morrow's duties not feeling, "If the Lord will, or if the Lord will not;" he goes to to-morrow's business calculating upon all he can do, and all he will do, not recognising the possibly disturbing element, there is a God: such a man is not theoretically an atheist, but practically he is one. He is, as the Apostle describes him, "without God." For "atheist" does not mean a person opposed to God, but a person without God. An antitheist is one opposed to God. Voltaire was an antitheist, that is, one who deliberately and avowedly opposed and hated God; who swore in his blasphemy that he would dethrone him; whose letters closed with the execration that he would erase Christ's name from the earth. He was not an atheist, but an antitheist—one full of conscious enmity to God, opposed to him, and determined, at all hazards, and whatever might be the issue, to resist him. But many that profess to be Christians,

in their practical life, are without God, by omitting him and his will and sovereignty in their calculations. At the same time we must be very careful not to see God in judgments only, but in mercies and blessings also. Many persons are atheists when mercies are showered upon them, and recognise God only when judgments overtake them. I see God in sunshine, if possible, more emphatically than in cloud. I see him in the golden harvest in its plentiful abundance, more clearly than I see him in the waves and waters of misfortune. I would wish more to see God in prosperity, and more to see myself, and my sins, and my unworthiness in adversity. But man's tendency is to see God when trouble comes, forgetting that his sin alone is to blame; and to see himself when prosperity comes, and to praise his own ingenuity and cleverness. It is the Christian's joy to see God in all that is beneficent, and beautiful, and happy; and to see his own sins, and wickedness, and guilt in the evils and the judgments that occasionally overtake him.

The associations of the antediluvians were all essentially depraved. "The sons of God married the daughters of men," an expression which denotes that the pious mingled with the depraved, without discrimination and without distinction. The Apostle lays down what is duty always—that they that marry are to marry in the Lord. The antediluvians thought that that was good enough for the trancendentalist, but not for practical and

every day life. And many think now, that it may be very beautiful for a higher dispensation, but that we must take other, and more sublunary, even mercenary elements into our estimate now. And again, "whether we eat or drink, we are to do all to the glory of God," is the Christian maxim, but that was not the maxim then. It was thought good enough for monks, and nuns, and hermits, but not for the business men of this world. Christianity ought to be the cement of every association. Exhaust it from a nation, and it will fall to pieces; let marriage be separated from Christianity as its basis, and what will it be? Just what it has been among the Socialists — a bargain, a piece of convenience, and to be broken as soon as the one party is dissatisfied with the other; and held as ceasing to be seen in heaven, it soon comes to be broken upon earth.

There was in the antediluvian world total disbelief of the testimony of Noah as to the coming judgments that should burst upon the earth. When Noah predicted, yet a hundred and twenty days the flood should come, how did they receive it? Just as men will receive those who prophesy the coming of Christ at the close of this dispensation. "Knowing this first," says Peter, confirmatory of the passage we are now commenting upon, "that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning

of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Those that lived in the days of Noah despised Noah's prophecy of a coming flood. Their conclusion was, There is not water enough in the

basin of the ocean to rise to the great height to which it will be requisite it should rise in order to destroy the world. But just as scientific men had decided that Noah's prophecy was the mere crotchet of an old man who had lost his mind, the fountains of the great deep burst, the windows of heaven were opened, and the earth that then was perished. To argue, therefore, that the laws of nature prevent the fulfilment of God's word, is to assert that the law is greater than the Lawgiver, and the thing created greater than the Creator himself. Those who perished in that great and awful judgment had an offer of escape. The old and venerable preacher of righteousness stood upon the steps of the ark he had built by the prescriptions of his God, and told them that every one that would believe God's testimony by his lips, and come into that ark, should be saved from the deluge that would soon sweep the earth and depopulate it. They were, in the language of Scripture, disobedient then, and their souls are in the prison of hell now. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." When you are told of the awful baptism, not of flood, but of fire, and when you are invited to escape, not by the ark of a temporal deliverance, but by Christ, the Great Deliverer, many thousands will despise the prophecy, deride the prophet, and turn aside, one to his farm and another to his merchandise, and care for none of these things. Nevertheless it shall be true, as stated by an Apostle in the Epistle

to the Thessalonians, where he tells us, that "Christ shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance in flaming fire on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

We have it recorded in the antediluvian days that the Spirit ceased to strive with man any more. When the Holy Spirit ceases to bless the preaching of the Gospel, it fails to have effect. When he ceases to imprint upon the heart the truths that are addressed to the ear, all preaching and all hearing is vain. And just before the close—before the lightning cloud shall come, in which Christ shall be seen as in heaven with power and great glory, God's Holy Spirit will cease to strive; the day of grace will be finished, the day of judgment will have begun—cut it down, it only cumbers the ground that is now to be blessed and sanctified with His presence, and become the bright dwelling-place of all that believe for ever and ever. To show that we have not exaggerated in the least, I will read the summary of all that shall be in the last days from 2 Timothy iii.: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affec-

tion, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Such is the picture that will be a sign of the times in the days preceding the coming of the Son of man.

Christianity is not to be a progressive development from what it is now to its millennial glory. The idea of many excellent Christians — excellent in all that constitutes the vitality of the truth, but I think deceived and mistaken in this — is that by the aid of missions, by the distribution of the Bible, by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit of God, this present dispensation shall have its piety so deepened that the Millennium shall be its coronal, a Millennium the product of elements that are now in action; and not a new age and a new dispensation altogether. Now, if I understand the Bible, it says that the last days of this dispensation shall be worse than the first — that when the Son of man cometh shall he find faith upon the earth? — that as it was in the days of Noah, just before the judgment of water came, so shall it be in our days just before the judgment of fire comes; men living without God, marrying and giving in marriage, eating, drinking, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Judging from the Bible, the Millennium belongs to a distinct dispensation. I do not believe that it is the complement of the present age, but the commencement of a new one.

This dispensation is the dispensation of the Spirit, where the Holy Spirit is electing a people out of this world to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people: the next dispensation is when Christ — the King, the true Shechinah, the glory of God — shall personally be revealed, shall personally reign, and all shall be righteous, none depraved, the lion lie down with the lamb, and there shall be no more tears, nor death, nor weeping, nor sorrow, nor crying: the Millennium, the beautiful morning dawn of the everlasting heaven that spreads over all the universe, and earth undergo a re-Genesis, just as the body undergoes a resurrection, and be the heaven of God's people, more beautiful than Paradise, the first home of man, when he came from the hands of his Creator.

We look, therefore, for matters to get worse as the end approaches. And whilst there are more of the people of God than there have been, and more in our own land than in any land upon earth, yet the vast majority of Christendom answers too terribly to the portrait given by the Apostle. Many Christians feel it difficult to entertain the idea that this world is to be the abode of the saints in the future age. But why should you suppose we are to live in some etherialized atmosphere, intangible, and invisible? Adam and Eve held communion with God in Eden, and is it impossible that we shall be made so pure, morally so perfect, and the earth, our dwelling-place, so cleansed of every impure element, that it shall be the loveliest orb in

the universe, because the prodigal one restored to its Creator's presence, to its Father's bosom; while all the sister orbs of creation sing for joy, "Let us rejoice, for this our sister orb was lost, and is now found; was dead, and is now made alive."

But if we are—and I believe we are now—rapidly approaching the close of this dispensation, our first inquiry is, Are we Christians? — are our hearts changed? — are we sprinkled with atoning blood? In other words, is religion anything to us, and are we anything to it? The religion of this book is not something within its boards, to be read when we open it, and to be forgotten when we put our Bible in our library. But, if I understand it, the religion of this book is to go into every nook and corner of the human heart, to penetrate every by-way of private life, every broad-way of public life, — to regenerate men, influence and make them wiser, happier, holier, and more like God. Has it done so? What better are you for the fact that this book was written? Would you be just as you are now, if you had never heard that Christ was crucified? Would you have been just at this moment as you are and have been, if there were no such thing as religion in the world? You may estimate the influence religion has had upon you, and the connexion you have had with it, by this: — How much has it done for you? What has it made me that I could not have been made without it? What hopes has it kindled in my heart that I could not have without it? What blessed prospects

has it opened up? How far has it lifted my heart above the world, and taught me while in the world not to be of it? If this book, this religion, this Christ crucified, be your trust, your hope, your peace, the anchor of your soul, sure and steadfast, then, whether Christ takes you to him, or he comes to you, "Blessed are ye, enter into the joy of your Lord," will be the glad and welcome summons given to your souls.

VI.

SIGNS, CELESTIAL AND TERRESTRIAL.

Our blessed Redeemer, as the prophet of the Church, foretells the signs and sights and phenomena of the twilight of this dispensation with the same precision with which an astronomer tells the transit of a planet, or the hour and depth of an eclipse, — "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. xxiv. 29—31.

The advent of Jesus is not to be a secret known by the few, but a fact, or rather, a phenomenon that shall be witnessed by the wide world itself. As the lightning shines without the canopy, lighting it up with all its brilliancy and splendour, so the Son of man shall come with such majestic

tokens of his approach, that every eye, not the eye only of his own, shall see him. After having described the tribulation of the days he has mentioned, namely, the downfall of Jerusalem, with probably some allusive references to the end of this dispensation, he proceeds to answer the second question of his disciples, — "What shall be the sign of thy coming," or personal appearance, and "of the end of the world," or the Gentile dispensation? The answer to that question is contained in the sequel of the chapter.

He says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." All prophecy leads us to expect, before the close of the present dispensation, unprecedented tribulation, — national, social, ecclesiastical, political, universal. You cannot open a single prophecy in the Old Testament Scripture that relates to the end of the world, without finding passages parallel to that which we have quoted, and expressive of the same approaching catastrophes. For instance, we are told, in Jeremiah xxx. 7, "That day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Again, we read in Daniel xii. 1, 2, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time

thy people," that is, the Jews, "shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And if we refer to the parallel Gospel, we shall find the same facts given with other touches that identify the period more closely with the time of the end. Our Lord says there, Luke xxi. 24, "The Jews shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations"—that is their condition now: "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." How long? "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." What times? The times, time, and half a time,—the period assigned them. And then he adds, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea"—the crowds, the people—"and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory." We might quote other passages, which establish the same point, that prior to the end of this dispensation all the elements of evil shall ferment, all the powers and principalities of Satan shall coalesce. His last grand stroke for a world shall be struck; his last desperate effort, linked with all that is evil, shall be made to retain a foothold on a world of

which he is the usurper, but from which we know he shall be cast out unto everlasting chains, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But amongst the special signs that are to precede the immediate advent of our Lord, it is said that "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fail," as it might be rendered. This shall take place literally, as well as significantly; for wherever there is a prediction in ancient prophecy, or in the Apocalypse, we have first the literal, and next we have the moral effect of that prophecy. For instance, in the prediction of what was to take place after the pouring out of the seventh vial, you will find physical language used, having a corresponding physical fulfilment, and with a moral fulfilment also. In Rev. xvi. 17, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air:" I have before said that I believe that commenced in the year 1848. He was to pour his vial of judgment into the air; that is, not upon a particular nation, but upon the whole air, *i. e.* all. "And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." Then what took place? "There were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake." This denotes literally an earthquake, but it denotes also a moral convulsion amongst the people. Now, what took place in the year 1848? The whole of Europe was shattered to its very foundations. The newspapers of the day all spoke of that unprecedented earth-

quake, which reached and revolutionized the kingdoms of Europe, in comparison of which all previous ones were as nothing. "And the great city was divided into three parts." Every vial takes a time for its fulfilment; and, therefore, we expect the tripartite division of Europe, geographical, or political, or ecclesiastical, soon to take place. Nationality is a new cry, a new idea. Nations are all asking for their national rights; and the whole city is preparing to divide into what is probably its destined tripartite division, as predicted in the word of God. "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God." The Church of Rome just began to be visited in that year, and the judgment still sits on it. True, she seems recovering; but it is with a presentiment of her coming ruin, making her last desperate, but unsuccessful effort, to subjugate the world to her sway, to have another Hildebrand in the Vatican, and to have the kings of the earth kneeling at his feet for absolution. But she will not obtain it. There is no more risk of her obtaining power over the earth again, than of the middle ages returning to Europe. But, all these things began to take place in 1848, and they will be developed more and more intensely. In 1848 we had the physical air, as well as the moral atmosphere, tainted. Cholera then broke out, and yellow fever has been ravaging other parts of the world; and medical men will tell you that diseases that used to be entirely treated after certain laws cannot now be treated after the same laws, that

something seems to have occurred that has altered in several respects the sanitary condition of things. We have our laws morally or politically affected also.

The sun, it is said, shall be darkened. Why should not that be literal? When our Lord was crucified a preternatural darkness took place. The sun was created long before this world was created, but its office as a light-bearer began on the fourth day. Now, God has only to remove the light which the sun radiates, and all is darkness. He has only to suspend the function that the sun fulfils to the earth, and then there will be obscuration. No doubt, therefore, this will be literally fulfilled,—the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give her light,—just prior to that splendour that flashes on the world, and lights it up with unearthly and celestial brightness, there will be an obscuration and darkness like that which took place at the Crucifixion, which will give the people of God warning that the earth wanes to its close, and that a new dispensation is about to begin. On this subject I may refer you further to the following passages of Scripture. "The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine," Isa. xiii. 10. Again, "The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," Isa. xxiv. 23. Again, "I

will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light," Ezek. xxxii. 7. Again; "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts," Haggai ii. 7.

But accepting it in its moral as well as in its material significance, we can see how it will be fulfilled in that sense also. The sun is the constant symbol of the Saviour, the light of the sun is the truth of the gospel; the moon that reflects the sun's light upon the earth, and is a servant to the sun, is the representative in Scripture of the Church. I need not refer to passages to prove that stars are the ministers of the Church. Christ holds the seven stars in his right hand. All three are used figuratively by Joseph, where he saw the sun, the moon, and the stars, that is, persons in rank and authority, bow down to him, and do him homage. If this be the meaning of the text, we may expect that the light of the sun, that is, Christianity, will be darkened; that there will grow up on all sides portentous and frightful heresies. In one part of America these are at this moment rank and rife enough; and I need not tell you what is taking place in the Church of England at this moment, where the light of the sun, that is, Christianity, is undergoing, from some who are in it, but not of it, a fearful eclipse; and instead of the light brightening towards the Millennial morn, nearly two hundred of her ministers have receded into mediæval

darkness, and perhaps if two thousand more were to go to the same place they would not be acting against their own feelings and convictions, and would oblige the rest. What have we here, then? An obscuration of faith in some of the most prominent preachers of the gospel.

Then, the moon was not to give her light, that is, churches would lose the distinctness of their character, the purity of their doctrines, the holiness of their relationship, and become unfaithful. Whether the obscuration that has begun, and to which I have alluded, may go further, I cannot say; but this we do know, "that in the latter times some," —and that means a great number,—"shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of δαιμονίων," that is, separate spirits; "speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving." 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.

The stars were not to give their light. I have already shown in the obscuration of some, that these stars have ceased to be reflectors of the pure light of the sun, and are radiating darkness, not light, upon the world.

Then the powers of heaven are to be shaken. These, I believe, denote angels. They are not sun, nor moon, nor stars. Αἱ δυνάμεις are the words. Angels have a deep interest in the progress of Christianity; and when they see the last obscura-

tion of the light, the sun, moon, and stars changed from their original functions, they will be moved, and make ready to go forth and separate the tares from the wheat, and gather the elect of God into their everlasting home.

It is added, that when Christ comes "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn." Here, no doubt, is the Jewish people. The language is so peculiar, that I think it cannot be applied to the Gentiles. It is the usual Greek word applied to the Jews, πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ. Now, if we refer to ancient prophecy, we shall see how distinctly this is alluded to. For instance, in Zechariah xii. 9—10, "And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me," that is, Christ, "whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." We have an allusion to the very same thing in Revelations i. 7, where we read, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him," that is, the Jews: "and all kindreds of the earth (πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ) shall wail," or mourn, "because of him." But that wailing or mourning of the Jewish people is not a mourning of despair, but of genuine repentance. The Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon them all. They shall see

Christ, whom their fathers crucified, and shall mourn over the sins of their nation, and grieve over their own unfaithfulness to duty, to Christ, and to his gospel; and through his blood shall be pardoned, absolved, and sanctified, and become the metropolitan people among the nations of the earth.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." It has puzzled many to decide what is the meaning of this. Alford, a sober and competent critic, thinks it will be a picture of the Cross of Christ emblazoned upon the concave of the skies with unearthly brilliancy and splendour; that the nations shall see it, and some shall blaspheme while others shall rejoice in it. He seems to have come to this conclusion from the fact that Constantine, the Roman emperor, when the Roman empire was dissolved, and the Christian dispensation took its place, saw in the mid skies a brilliant Cross, and read the words Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα, "In this conquer." Eusebius says that it was not a dream or fancy, but a real vision. Well, Alford, guided by this historical fact, thinks that "the sign of the Son of man" will be what all Christendom has recognised as the peculiar sign of Christianity — glorying in the Cross—Christ and him crucified—that this Cross shall appear in the skies revealed in unearthly splendour, and shall strike the first deep presentiment into the hearts of men, that the Lord of glory, to whom it belongs, is just at our doors.

Others seem to think that it will be a brilliant meteor, something like that which guided the magi to the manger, which is called in our translation "a star," but which was not a literal orb, but some peculiar meteoric splendour, some celestial phenomenon, unprecedented, and not entered in the charts of ancient astronomy, so peculiar and striking as to be significant in their minds that One was born who was to be King of the Jews.

Others again think that by "the sign of the Son of man" is meant the advent of Elijah. I have not the least doubt that Elijah the prophet will literally come, and herald in Christ's second advent, just as John the Baptist literally came and heralded in Christ's first advent. To some this may seem strange, but I can come to no other conclusion, if it be believed that the writers of the sacred volume meant what they said. And if Elijah comes, his voice sounding in the streets of Europe, the mysterious appearance of one who comes from the realms of glory, clothed with its beauty, and spotless as its holiest tenantry, warning the nations in a voice such as was never heard before, and with an eloquence such as men never uttered before, will be a phenomenon so startling and striking, that God's people will hail him as the precursor of the advent of Jesus, while the world will probably treat him as Herod treated John the Baptist—listen to him for a moment, and then turn round, and attempt to destroy him. At all events, we gather that there will be some great sign that is to

precede the advent of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

But some will say, we cannot accept this prophecy of Christ's return, which is clearly pre-Millennial, or personal. May it not be spiritual? I answer, spiritually he has come already. "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." If we meet in Christ's name, Christ is in the midst of us. We have not to look forward to his advent in that sense, for in that sense he is here. Again; this must denote an advent different from that spiritual presence that is understood to be in all churches. He says, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And yet, he says, in another part, that he will come again, and receive us to himself.

In the second place; it is not his providential advent. Christ is in every fact in history, in every incident of the world, reigning, ruling, ordering all things to the glory of his name, and to the good of his people.

It has also a character and a concomitant so peculiar, that it cannot refer to his coming to destroy Jerusalem. Can it be said that on his advent to subvert that illustrious capital, the Jews looked upon Him whom they had pierced and mourned?

They rather blasphemed the holy name by which they were called. Can it be said that when Jesus came to destroy Jerusalem, he gathered his elect from the four winds of heaven? Can it be said that he came to destroy Jerusalem in the splendour of the lightning, in the cloud, with power and great glory? If you will so torture language as to apply these verses to that providential advent, you must not blame the Roman Catholic if he find in Scripture transubstantiation, purgatory, and the worship of the Virgin Mary. We should take the Bible literally, wherever its literal interpretation is not inconsistent with its own previous explanations; and until we can see a better than the literal interpretation, we must accept it as the mind of the Spirit of God. For instance, it was said by an ancient prophet, that Jesus should come sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. An ancient interpreter of one class would say, "We cannot suppose that the Messiah will come literally so; we must understand it to mean that he will come in very lowly circumstances." But he literally came sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass; and he quotes the prophecy as literally and verbatim fulfilled in his case. We therefore understand that this prophecy will be literally fulfilled, and justly think that to apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem is to apply phraseology where it is not carried out by actual facts.

Some excellent Christians think that it refers to

Christ's coming at each individual's death. But when a Christian dies, does Jesus come like lightning from one end of heaven to the other? When a Christian dies, can it be said that Jesus comes from heaven with power and with great glory? Does the trumpet then sound? Do the dead then rise? Do all the tribes of the earth then mourn? It cannot be said so. It must therefore refer to a coming or an advent subsequent to this, and such as is described in other passages of Scripture, where Jesus is said to come the second time to them that look for him without a sin-offering unto salvation.

The Apostles themselves thought that Christ was then about to restore the kingdom to Jerusalem, and they said (Acts i. 6), "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" But what was his answer? "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." He assumes that the kingdom will be restored; he does not condemn their idea that the kingdom will be restored; but only, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." And again, when they stood looking steadfastly toward heaven, as Christ ascended in the cloud visibly before them, "two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;" that is, in the cloud with power and with great glory.

We have therefore in all these passages a reference to Christ's second or personal advent; and therefore I believe, with Job, "that my Redeemer

liveth, and that I shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." What a glorious hope! What a blessed thought, that we are not forsaken orphans, that our world is not a cast-off orb, but that Jesus has engraven it upon the palms of his hands, that his name shall be engraven upon it, that it shall reflect his image, and that a world that began with Paradise shall end with a better, a brighter, and a more glorious one than that with which it dawned!

But it is added, "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven." Let us here recollect the parable in which it is said, "the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels." But what do the angels do? They first gather the wheat into barns, and then they cast the tares into the fire. So here, Christ sends forth his angels, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds of heaven.

Are we amongst the elect? Shall we be numbered with the wheat? Shall we be gathered into Christ's barns? Are we prepared to enter into that rest that remaineth for the people of God? Who are the elect? It is not difficult to know. The doctrine of election itself is a mystery, but the elect themselves are not undistinguishable, even in the midst of this obscure but perplexing dispensation. They are those who have been chosen of Christ.

The word "elect" means chosen — they that are chosen of Christ. Such unquestionably there are. "Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that ye should be holy." "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 2.) I have not the least doubt that the doctrine of election is true. But what is that doctrine? That God saves me, not because of anything in me, or of anything done by me, but because of the riches of his grace, and the sovereignty of his Almighty love. But there are some Christians who deny that there is any such doctrine; but, singular enough, while they deny the name, they admit the reality. Take the lowest Arminian, who is a true Christian, and ask him, "Do you mean to say that the first movement towards heaven is on my part?" he will answer, "No, no; God must first draw before we follow; God must first speak before we answer." Well, grant me that, and I will not quarrel about the name election, since we agree about the reality; for if I am chosen irrespective of anything in me, it matters not whether that choice was made ten minutes ago, or thousands of years ago. It is not a question of time, but a question of grace; and if you admit that all grace in the heart of the believer is not an original thing, but a response to a first movement on God's part, you grant the substance even when you deny the name of the doctrine of election. But if you ask,

Who are they who are elect? They who have chosen Christ to be their Saviour. Make sure that you have chosen Christ, and never trouble yourselves about the question, whether he has chosen you. Do not try to peer into God's hidden book, which no man can penetrate, but read God's revealed book, and compare your character with it, for things revealed are for us and our children. If you love Christ, that proves that he loves you; for what is his own word, "We love him, because he first loved us." If I want to know whether I am elect, I do not begin at heaven and trace downward to my heart, but I begin at my heart and trace upward to heaven. I do not try to hook the ladder to the top of the monument first, but I put the base on the ground, and then place the top of the ladder against the top of the monument. High predestinarians first try to prove that they are elect, and then they infer that they may live as they like; whereas, the proper way is to see whether we live the life of the saints of God, and then infer that our name is written in the Lamb's book of life, in which are the names of all that believe.

Those who are elect and are chosen of Christ, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, rest upon his sacrifice for the pardon of sin, are clothed with his righteousness as their only title of heaven, and approach a communion-table and the judgment-seat trusting only in this, that "He who knew no sin was made sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

The elect are the regenerate. Every man who is born again is elect. If your tastes have been altered, if you now love what once you hated, if you like the Bible much better than a novel or romance, if you like the house of God vastly more than the playhouse, if you prefer the things that belong to your peace more than the idle topics and political squabbles of the day, you give evidence that you are a child of God. It is not alleged that you should take no interest in the things of time, but that if you be the elect, the things of eternity will occupy a larger space in your hearts.

The elect are the sons of God. "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Election is the root, sonship and service are the blossoms and fruit that grow upon it.

Let us see here the safety of the people of God. Let the sun be darkened in his orbit, let the moon become pale, let the stars fall from their sockets, let all nature be covered with a funeral pall, let the first throes of nature's desolation be felt, let the footstep of the approaching Judge be echoing at our doors—nothing shall separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord; for he will gather his elect, however concealed, obscured, hidden, or suffering, from the four winds of heaven.

Behold the true unity of the Church of Christ—

Christ in the midst of them. Those who are now ecclesiastically, mechanically, materially divided, will then be drawn to Christ, and constitute together the bride meeting the Bridegroom, the long-waiting widow seeing her Husband return from the skies, "and so be for ever with the Lord." When we hear urged against Protestantism that it is destitute of unity, we should recollect that there is no such thing as perfect unity in the Church, just as there is no such thing as perfect holiness in the individual Christian's heart. The Apostle tells us, that as long as there is a ministry there will not be unity; for what does he say in Eph. iv. 11—13? "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith,"—implying that the existence of a ministry is to produce an ultimate unity, but that as long as that ministry exists, that is, as long as this dispensation lasts, perfect unity will not be.

Notice also the catholicity of the Church of Christ. It is selected from every tribe, and kindred, and tongue. The broken fragments are now its composition, but then they shall be all combined and consolidated for ever.

Let us see the true visibility of the Church of Christ. All creation groans and travails in pain, waiting—for what? The manifestation of the sons of God; that is, the visibility of the Church. The

Church of Rome says she has visibility, catholicity, unity, antiquity. In all these things she pretends to have what the Millennial church only shall have. She claims noble prerogatives, that are only to be actual when Christ comes, and gathers from the four winds all them that are his.

Are we among the elect? Are we believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? If we be Christians, whether he takes us to himself, or comes to us, it will be equally well. But the great question of the day should be, "Am I a Christian?" It is easy to be so. There is nothing to prevent our being so. Christ invites us to become so. He merely bids us lay aside the bondage and the service of sin, and Satan, and the world; and decide for the service and the acceptance of him whose service is perfect freedom, and communion with whom is the highest happiness that human nature is susceptible of here below — a happiness that, like the opening spring, will melt into the perfect happiness of the everlasting summer, the first rays of which begin to sprinkle the distant hills, intimating already that the sun, long below the horizon, is about to ascend to his meridian throne, and send down his midday splendour upon a world ever holy and ever happy.

VII.

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

THE feeling in the heart of Christendom, expressed by "the Desire of all nations," is significant of the end in proportion to its intensity and depth. Let us analyze it as a past thirst partly satisfied, and as a present longing that can be met only when He who awakens and fills it shall come, the Hope of the Church, the Heir of the world. "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." (Haggai ii. 6—9.)

It is very remarkable, as well as refreshing to a Christian mind, to go back along the current of history, and to read those ancient prophecies which relate to the person, the coming, and advent in glory, of the Son of God. The angel said to the woman, "Come and see the place" — that is, the

grave—"where the Lord lay." We may go back to those ancient prophecies in the same spirit, and according to that invitation, see where Christ in ancient times was revealed to the Fathers. And we cannot open a single prophet without seeing God's mercy constantly promising, God's faithfulness constantly fulfilling. We have, in the glad tidings of great joy to all people, the fulfilment of a thousand promises, that sparkle like stars in the firmament in every page of God's holy Word; from the dim and distant one, "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head," to the nearer one, of the greatest magnitude and lustre, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulders; his name shall be called Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of peace, the Father of the age to come" —or "the everlasting Father." The Jews plainly enough expected the Messiah; their whole hearts and hopes were set and centred upon him. "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. It shall be said in that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." "Your father Abraham," says Jesus, "rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Therefore the birth of Christ was the great hope of Israel. Every Jewish father looked forward to it; every Jewish mother joyfully expected it; the whole nation of Israel had their hearts, their affections, and their hopes, centred there; and as their bondage became more bitter, and their enslavement

to the Roman emperor more complete, their hearts longed the more for the mighty Deliverer, of whom they should be able to sing, in songs of adoring gratitude, "This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." In the second chapter of Haggai, we are told that God's people were in a state of very great distress and depression of mind; and then, as on every similar occasion, God comforted them with the hope of a Messiah to come. It is most remarkable, in reading God's dealings with his ancient people, how on every occasion the comfort that he gives them is not temporal, but eternal deliverance — not some elevation in this world, but the hope of a Saviour, who should be Christ the Lord. We can see throughout the whole of these promises that Jesus was constantly preached to God's people as their comfort, and the very hope of him as sufficient to compensate for all their sorrow, their affliction, and their trials. He was spoken of as the Saviour, Christ the Lord, as "the Desire of all nations." In what shape can Christ be called "the Desire of all nations?" We answer, all nations felt in their hearts wants, longings, and losses, which nothing but the presence of the Lord of glory could thoroughly and completely remove. It cannot be said that the nations knew that Christ would come, who should remove their wants, and gratify their aspirations and their hopes; but all the nations of heathendom felt in themselves — and their best and most gifted spirits felt it most — a want, a loss, a sense of ruin, that

needed reparation; and losses that needed to be removed, and hunger that this world's bread could not satisfy, and thirst that this world's fountains could not remove: and they earnestly desired one who would allay these longings, unconscious that the burden of a thousand Jewish prophecies was the only Being who could possibly meet their wants and satisfy their desires. These yearnings, and hopes, and expectations of all the Gentile nations, wandered amongst them, airy, undefined, like shadowy spectres—knocking at every door for satisfaction, drinking from every fountain, if peradventure they might be removed; and only did they find their resting-place when He came whom they knew not, but who was ever promised and pledged as the only Being that could satisfy all their longings, and remove all their anxieties. In this state of mind the heathen drew upon imagination in order to meet the demands of their hearts; they deprived the mine of its marble, they spoiled the forest of its oak, they exhausted the resources of genius, they traversed the wide world in search of what could satisfy their idea of excellence, perfection, and happiness, and endeavoured by their own strength to remove that thirst which was to be removed only by him who was "the Desire of all nations." They longed for a Saviour they never heard of; they desired the advent of a satisfaction, the tidings of whose approach they did not know. The unconscious prophecy of heathendom has been the subject of much writing; and the

unconscious aspiration of heathendom after Christ, "the Desire of all nations," is very much a corresponding companion to it.

But let us look at individual feelings, wants, and desires, and see how Christ meets them; and how far the Gentile nations, that knew not, and that now know not Christ, have those feelings.

First, Christ was "the Desire of all nations," as a Redeemer from sin. The Greeks and Romans had not those enlightened apprehensions of the nature, the misery, and the issues of moral transgression, that we have; but the very worst and the most degraded had a lingering conviction that some great moral blight had passed into the human soul — had defaced all its ancient beauty, glory, and perfection — had introduced into the world itself all its disturbance, mutilation, and distress; and they felt themselves the victims of sin — they recognised its domination as the secret of their ills. Every school in ancient Greece had its prescriptions for its removal — every philosopher some great system which, if accepted, he thought would act upon the world like a charm, or be to the world a complete relief; but there was a sense among all the heathen that moral transgression was in some way the root of all their physical, their intellectual, their social, and their national distress; and that, unless the evil in man's heart could be eradicated, the sufferings in man's condition never could be laid. They did not know that Christ should come, a Redeemer from sin; but this was

what they blindly desired, and he is exactly what meets that desire; for in him we have remission through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. And it shows the profound philosophy, if I might use the word, of this blessed Gospel, that Christ came into the world not to ameliorate, as the first thing, man's outward state, but to expel from man's heart the secret of the fever that convulses and disturbs him continually; and, by the removal of the source of the evil, to ameliorate gradually, and ultimately altogether, the evils that oppress him. The evils that afflict society are not like drift-wood or loose stones lying upon its surface, which you may sweep away with a strong arm and with tolerable diligence; but like the roots of a primeval forest—the gnarled roots of ancient oaks —that have struck deep into the heart, or intertwined with the very feelings, affections, appetites, and passions of the soul: so much so that none but He that made man can be the Physician that can cure man. And, blessed be God, just when our need was the sorest and our ruin the most intolerable, "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law; that we might (no more be the slaves of sin, but) receive the adoption of sons." Thus, we have in Christ Jesus, as the Redeemer from sin, a response to the inmost, the deepest desire, of fallen humanity.

Christ, as the Redeemer from death, is the "Desire of all nations;" he meets that which

is the desire of all nations. The soberest man in the ancient heathen world had a deep and a very strong conviction that death is not the normal state of man; that it is something introduced since the creation of man; and that he was not originally made to die: and hence, amid all the traditions of heathendom that have floated down the stream of time, there was kept constantly afloat, never submerged, the beautiful recollection that once there was a golden age when there was no death; and still the strong and ineradicable hope that man would cleave to with his last gasp, that there should be a golden age again, when sickness, and sorrow, and death should for ever flee away. Even in heathen times man would not accept the grave as his only and his ultimate home; he could not believe it possible that this exquisite mechanism of ours, when dissolved in dust, was to be the end of us. Cicero—who stood upon the loftiest pinnacle, and seems with Socrates and Plato to have caught from afar, it may be refracted and reflected, the first beams of the Son of Righteousness — owned, "I cannot demonstrate logically the immortality of the soul; but such is my conviction that it is true, that though I cannot prove it, I will never let it go, but hold it fast as I believe it is true." When he said so, he only expressed what we all well know, that there are instincts in our hearts truer than logic — that there are conclusions that spring from the depths of man's soul far juster than mathematics can prove—and that God has left in

us these lingering lights, these inextinguishable recollections of our pristine glory, that are to us, in the depths of our ruin, prophecies that the glory will return again. So the heathen felt that death could not be the end of them. They could not see a light in the valley of the shadow of death; they could not see the other end of the long, dark, and dreary tunnel; but they believed, nevertheless, that there was an end to it; and whether they believed it from the instincts of their nature, or from some of the unspent echoes that still reverberated through the dark and dreary wastes of the world of God's first truth proclaimed in Paradise, we know not; but they held fast this—that death was unnatural, that man was not meant to die. They believed the matter would yet be put right; and that at all events, if the body must be resolved into its parent dust, that the soul would escape from the body as lightning parts from the cloud, and not rest till it was in joy in the presence of God. Now, what they guessed, and hoped, and yearned, and longed for, as their deepest, their universal desire, we know: "Unto you is born the Prince of Life; he that believeth on me hath life; I am the resurrection and the life." "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of everlasting life."

Christ is "the Desire of all nations," inasmuch as he is the Restorer of the world. I mentioned that the heathen longed for the restoration of all

things. They believed that the golden age would again return. They did not know how it was to return, or by what power it was to be brought back again; but still they would not give up hope. When nations cease to hope, they wither down to their very roots; and if humanity had ever ceased to hope for something better than it had, it would have committed universal suicide. But there seem to have been left in man's will hopes that could not, and that would not, be extinguished; and both Jew and Gentile in ancient times, and the most savage heathen in modern times, have a recollection that the world was once in a better state, and a strong ineradicable belief, that the world will be restored to a better state still. And, very singular, the names given to the earth by both Greeks and Romans, both either commemorate its being once pure, or are prophecies or promises that it will be pure again. For instance, the Greeks called the world *cosmos*. The meaning of the word *cosmos*, from which comes our word "cosmetic," is what is beautiful or perfect. And the Romans, as if the same idea had overspread all heathendom, called the world *mundus*, which means that which is clean, pure, perfect, undefiled. In either case, two names so singular—the one not borrowed from the other, one not the translation of the other—words which sprung into human speech as the embodiment of human anticipations—were to heathendom the only shreds of a Gospel that they had, the prophecy that the earth should again be *cosmos*—

beautiful; again be *mundus*—pure; and all things restored to their pristine loveliness, glory, and perfection. The Apostle tells us, in words that we know to be true, that their hope in this matter was right. "The whole creation," says the Apostle, "groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now;" what intensity of expression! But it does so; "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The Apostle represents the earth as a stricken creature, mourning and complaining to its God; and longing, and hoping, and praying, that one day it may be delivered from its burden, purified of its pollution, disinfected of its poison, and made again the earth, the happy mother of a happy family, reigning and rejoicing upon it. And the Apostle tells us it will be so; that all things wait for this, when the earth will be restored, all creation's deserts rejoice and blossom as the rose; when its most desecrated spots will be consecrated, its most barren spots fertilised, and the Paradise that shall end the world be more glorious, beautiful, and fair, than the Paradise with which the world began.

Now the poor heathen, like the Christian, (only in less measure,) longed for a better world, as the sailor for his haven, the traveller for his home, the exile for his country, humanity for its restoration, its paradise, and its peace. Christ is that Restorer. His words are, "Behold, I make all things new." And in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation, you have the prediction that all

things will be made new, and that what the heathen hoped for, Christians know, believe, and are assured, will come to pass.

Christ is the Light of all nations, inasmuch as he is now — and professed to be, when he came into our world — the great Revealer of God. Far as human nature had gone from God, it never yet gave up God altogether. Those lingering traditions that existed in the minds of the heathen, and exist still, are in their way remarkable and indirect proofs of the original truth from which they come. Whenever you see a bad sovereign made of brass and gilt, it is the proof that there is a good sovereign: the imitation is always the evidence of an original. So all these lingering truths, recollections, dim presentiments, cherished promises, that survived and found expression in the language of the heathen, are evidences of grand original truths, of which they were the distorted refractions. Heathendom, in its greatest aberration from God, never forgot him or renounced him altogether. No nation, even the most degraded, has been found in which there has not been some impression of a God; although it is quite possible that man may be so brutalized, that the animal shall comparatively be the grave of the intellectual and the moral. As we know not what a height of glory and magnificence man may be lifted to, we know not what a depth of degradation he may also sink to. The very fact that he is capable of such elevation and such degradation, is a proof of the greatness of man as he was

originally made, and of the possibility, not to say more, of his restoration to a nobler and a better state. If we go to the most cultivated heathen nations, we find their sense of God, their desire to know God; their longing to get a glimpse of his glory as he passed by was so intense, that when God would not come to them, they tried by their own might and wisdom to realize a likeness of God upon earth. Take the remains of the Greek chisel — what magnificent remains! And what gave them their magnificence? Why is it that the human form has been carved with a beauty, a symmetry, a magnificence, far beyond the original, and to imitate which is the aspiration of our most gifted statuaries still? What made it so? It was the lingering idea of a God, which they tried to embody in the yielding and obedient marble, that has made their remains so magnificent and beautiful. Their statuary was just their theology; it was their attempt to make visible Him of whom they had some dim and distant recollection: it was the inspiration of this idea that made their artistic works so beautiful and so striking. And at last, when they had exhausted all the resources of their great genius, and produced those remains that are the admiration of the most cultivated minds, in their despair they built an altar to "the unknown God," by which they confessed that man by searching could not find out the Almighty. He might draw out the secrets of the earth below, he might discover all the glories of the firmament above, he

might demonstrate the most intricate mathematical problems and theorems; but man could not discover God. We need a revelation from God to us. We never can make the discovery from ourselves that will land us in the knowledge of God. This which the heathen so earnestly desired is accomplished. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh — the virgin-born is Emmanuel, God with us. He has come down from heaven to earth, so near to us, so close to us, that we can see him, comprehend him, and as truly hold communion with him, as if he were our friend, our companion, and our brother; and yet he remains so holy, bears so visibly the trace of divinity, that whilst he is so near, and so close, and so familiar, we can yet see in him the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. We have therefore, in Jesus, God manifest in the flesh; and heathendom, in the reception of him, the gratification of its deepest, its most anxious and cherished desire. But, you say, we do not now see Christ, we are not now in contact with him; and to speak of God being manifest in the flesh, to us who cannot see him, is not correct. We answer, we can form as correct an estimate of a person by the acts he has done, or spoken, and written, and left behind him, as we could if he were actually present in the midst of us. Take, for instance, the great poet of the English language, Shakspeare: I believe that, by reading his writings, you can form a more just and accurate idea of Shakspeare than you could have

done if you had been his companion, and gone with him into all the scenes of dissipation and frivolity into which that great and gifted genius so frequently plunged. The proper idea of a person is not derived from his bodily presence, but from the reflection of his mind, his character, his conduct, and all the truths he has left behind him. See the Apostles: when Christ was in the midst of them—when they saw him bodily present in the midst of them — how dim, how obscure, how very erroneous, were their comprehension and their apprehension of him; but after he ascended in the cloud, and left them, these very disciples that had so poor an idea of him that they would not follow him, when he was alive upon the earth, to Pilate's judgment-seat, after he was gone had so just an apprehension of his glory, that they followed an unseen Christ to martyrdom, to death, to shame, and suffering. The Publicans that sat with him at the table, the fishermen that followed him at his bidding, never understood Christ till he was taken from them. Then his whole life became a transfiguration; every latent feature shone out with unearthly and undying lustre; they saw what a great Being had been in the midst of them, and understood what great sin they perpetrated who crucified, not a man, but the Lord of glory; and what shame belonged to them who had seen, and understood, and comprehended so little of him who had been so near them. A character with whom you are familiar seems to you, as long as he is with you,

very commonplace, very insignificant; but when some friend that you love is lifted away by the sea to a distant land, then traits appear in his character when absent which you never saw when he was present; beauties and excellences come up in memory which you never detected when you gazed upon his countenance; and you discover that you have a deeper and a clearer idea of your absent friend in consequence of his absence than you ever had when he was personally present in the midst of you. So is it with our blessed Lord. He is now absent; but he has left on the sands of time footprints so legible and clear — he has bequeathed in this precious legacy, the Bible, such an autograph and portrait of himself — we have received by inspired amanuenses such traits, sketches, sentiments, thoughts, lessons, miracles of beneficence, and feats of power—that we have a more clear apprehension of Christ Jesus as God manifest in the flesh, than ever the apostles had when they were with him, or they that saw him in the flesh, and listened to the wonderful words that proceeded out of his mouth. And this deepening desire, this growing appreciation of his excellence, is all preparatory to that day when he will come again, no more the Man of sorrows, obscured by the cloud, but the Son of God, in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And we shall then find that the loftiest apprehensions we cherished of his excellence came infinitely short of the grand and lasting reality.

Christ is the Desire of nations as the perfect Man. It is one of the most wonderful thoughts in the Bible, that we have an instance of the possibility of the absolute perfection of this nature of ours. Christ is as precious to me as the revealer of what man may be made, as the revealer of what God is to man. What a sublime thought, that these limbs of ours can express divinity! What a sublime thought it is, that this fallen shrine of our humanity may be rebuilt, reconsecrated, and be the very mirror of Deity itself! What a thought, that Deity has looked through our eyes, has listened through our ears, has walked along our streets, and spoken our speech, and sympathized with all our sufferings, and presented a heart that gives a resounding echo to all our griefs and our woes! What was the greatest wish of the heathen, in addition to those already explained? It was to see the perfect man. Every school in Greece has its *beau ideal* of a perfect man. The Epicureans thought that the perfect man was he that gratified his appetites, and lived just as he liked. The Stoics thought that the perfect man was he who neither wept nor laughed, neither rejoiced nor sorrowed, but, in proportion as he approached the granite, the nearer he approached perfection. But we have in Christ Jesus the perfect Man; not the granite man of the Stoics—for Jesus "rejoiced in spirit;" Jesus wept, and sympathized with human joys and human sorrows—nor yet the man of the Epicureans, to whom this world, and the gratifica-

tion of the lusts of the flesh, was all; but one who, in the world, was not of it — one who presents a character so perfect that even the most violent opponents of Christianity have not dared to touch it; and Rousseau, the sceptic, has given the most beautiful portrait of him whom he denied to be the only Saviour of the world. In this respect Christ answers and meets the desire of all nations.

He meets the desire of all nations in that he is the perfect Sacrifice. Jew and Gentile were constantly offering up sacrifices; and I do not know a more impressive proof of the universal consciousness of man that some great curse had intervened between God and mankind, than the fact that in every nation that we know, sacrifices — and sacrifices approaching in value to the greatness of the sin that had been perpetrated — were universally practised; and among the ancients even human sacrifices were offered, in the hope that human sins might be forgiven. The sacrificial rites of Levi, which sceptics complain of as so cumbersome, and unwortny of God, are simplicity itself when compared with the cumbersome and shocking rites of the polished Greeks and the civilized Romans; and all these sacrifices, which existed in every land, were nature seeking after the grand sacrifice—was humanity, conscious of a disruption, seeking restoration again—was nature, feeling after our Father, if peradventure it might find him.

But whilst we have spoken of this text as illustrated in the first advent of Christ—and rightly so

—it is impossible to conclude that the prediction is exhausted by the Saviour's advent and birth in Bethlehem. The language has no adequate fulfilment in the past, and must in a great extent await the future. For instance, "I will shake all nations." "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." Christ so far their desire I have shown him to be; but there is a desire even in the hearts of God's people that is not yet met; when Christ comes the second time without sin unto salvation, that desire will be met. The language employed by the prophet evidently indicates the close of this dispensation; for he says, in another verse: "I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother." Now, it cannot be said that when Christ was born there was any shaking of the heavens and the earth. The Temple of Janus was shut; universal peace predominated from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. It cannot be said that when Christ was born the kingdoms of the heathen were overthrown; for we read that Judea had been overthrown, but the kingdoms of the heathen remained still. It was the Jews that suffered, not the heathen, at the destruction of Jerusalem; and therefore I think that the commentary of those

who suppose that this shaking of the heavens and the earth, this destruction of the heathen, was all accomplished by the dissolution of the Jewish polity and the destruction of Jerusalem, really does not explain the text: it seems to intimate a futurity in which all these things will come to pass. But the best proof of it is not the conjecture of a commentator, but the opinion of an inspired writer. For what does the Apostle say, in the Epistle to the Hebrews? He tell us: "whose voice"—speaking of the giving of the Law—"whose voice then shook the earth"—that is, at the giving of the Law—"but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." The Apostle Paul, sixty years after the birth of Christ, quotes this very text as not then fulfilled; and shows that that shaking or convulsion has to come in the lapse of the years that were before him, which should fulfil the prophecy of Haggai: "I will shake not the earth only, but the heavens, and the sea, and the dry land." And this shaking is explained by Peter, when he says that all these things shall be dissolved—that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.

Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." That is the removal of the old earth and the old heavens as of the things that are shaken, in order that the new earth and the new heaven, as of things that cannot be shaken, may remain. If, then, the text is not yet fulfilled — if the Desire of all nations came to bear the cross, in order that the earth may be renovated — we are warranted from this and other texts to entertain the opinion that the Desire still of all the people of God will come, not to bear the cross, but to wear the crown, that the earth may at length be restored, and all things be made new. That Christ's second advent is still the desire of the Christian, is obvious from this—that no sooner had he left the world than his people began to pray, what has been continued as their prayer still, "Come, Lord Jesus;" and the promise was given to that people, "Unto you that look for him, he will come as ye have prayed, the second time, without sin, unto salvation. Now, the reason why we should wish for Christ's second advent as the real fulfilment of all is, that when he comes there will be times of refreshing, as says the Apostle, from

the presence of the Lord. If we desire this refreshment to the weary, this rest for the exile, we should long and pray for that advent of Him who is the desire of both and the satisfaction of all. We read, also, that when Christ comes there will be the times of the restitution of all things. Everything that sin has stained will be put right; every tie that death has snapped will be restored; the grave shall yield up its deposit, Death shall let go his prisoners; all that we lost in Paradise shall be regained when Christ comes; there shall be no more tears, nor crying, nor sin, nor grief, nor sorrow; but all former things will have passed away, all things will have become new. Therefore, to every believer, Christ's second advent is the deepest desire and the yearning of his heart.

He comes the second time without sin unto salvation, our desire—our deepening desire. We pray for his coming because all that now shades his glory, grieves his people, or oppresses mankind, will then utterly pass away. The Crescent in the East will have waned and disappeared with the things that have been shaken; the *tiara*, that inflicts its tyranny in the West, will be utterly broken and put away, and mingled with the things that have been, no more to be restored again. Humanity, oppressed by the tyranny of the one, slain and depressed by the superstition of the other, will be emancipated; and there will be no more error to mislead, no more oppression to grind down; but a free, a holy, and a happy people,

rejoicing under the sovereignty and sway of a loving and affectionate God.

When Christ comes, the Sabbath of the earth will then come. "There remaineth," says the Apostle, "a Sabbath-keeping" — or, as we very properly translate it, "a rest for the people of God." Earth will rest from its groans, humanity will rest from its toils; all things will bask in the glory and sunshine of an everlasting Sabbath; and all that has been injured in the weary work-day of the world's history, will be refreshed, restored, and made glorious, in its last and its everlasting Sabbath. All disputes among us will be put an end to; every denomination of true Christians will then discover that each was but a side chapel in the same grand cathedral, worshipping under the same roof, resting on the same floor, chanting the same divine hymn, only in different dialects of the same mother tongue; and that, instead of quarrelling as they now do, they ought to have forgiven the smaller points in which they differed, for the sake of the magnificent and glorious one on which they were at one.

If all this is to take place — if all earth is to be restored, if humanity is to be reconstituted, reconsecrated, and made happy — if there is to be an everlasting Sabbath—peace, joy, and righteousness overspreading the whole earth — then, surely, that day should be our earnest and prayerful desire; its advent should be our joyous hope. His promise remains waiting for the hour when prophecy shall

be history, and prediction shall be fact. "I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land:" and as sure as you expect him, so sure the Desire of all nations will come, and the universe shall be filled with his glory; and there is no temple therein, but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The nearer the day of his advent comes, the deeper the desire of nations for it will grow. Christians will pray more earnestly for his coming. Weary humanity will thirst more intensely for a cessation of its griefs, its cares, its fears, its woes and travail. And when longer delay would issue in despair, the sign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven will end all signs and sacraments, and introduce the glory that endures for ever.

VIII.

THE FINAL DESTINY.

THE people, the creation, the Church of Christ, has a noble destiny. It is expressed in these words: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

In the 30th verse of the 39th chapter of Exodus it is stated, that on the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, which was to be worn around the brow of the high priest of Israel, there should be the engraving as of a signet—"Holiness to the Lord."

Now, says the prophet Zechariah, an age comes when every one shall be as holy as the high priest was; and everything shall be as holy as that mitre was; and over all the length and breadth of God's created universe, like a beautiful illuminated scroll, shall be written and seen, as well as actually embodied, "Holiness to the Lord." That this is not a present, but a future scene, is obvious from the

words of the prophet. He does not say it has been in the past; but, "In that day" — that is, some future day — "there shall be upon the bells of the horses" — that is, the very humblest and lowest parts of his covering and furniture — and upon all the pots and vessels in every house and sanctuary this sublime designation, "Holiness to the Lord."

When is this to be? The prophet says it shall be "in that day." Let us try to find out when and what that day shall be, by noticing the continuity of this prophecy with what is said in a previous chapter. In the 9th chapter of Zechariah, at the 9th verse, we read the prophecy of the coming of Christ, his humiliation, suffering, and sorrow. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." This was literally fulfilled when he came to suffer. The next is, "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." So in the 11th chapter, at the 12th verse: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price: and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." The reference is obvious. So in the 13th chapter, at

the 6th verse: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." These are descriptions of the first event. The second event that follows is the dispersion of the Jews, recorded at great length in the 11th chapter of this prophecy, at the 6th verse: "I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land"—that is, Palestine—"saith the Lord: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands: and I fed the flock"—a symbolical allusion. In the 16th verse, there is the prophecy of the raising up of a shepherd, of a leader. The whole of the 11th chapter evidently predicts the dispersion of the Jews. The 12th chapter describes the restoration of the Jews, which is given at very great length and with very great fulness and beauty. "I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling." "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before

them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart."

These expressions, as we have already seen, denote that they are to be settled in their own land, when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn — restored in an unconverted state — that they will attempt to build a temple for their worship. I have seen a prospectus, as mentioned before, of a Jewish society, for building that very temple. They are to be restored to their own land — the approaching downfall of Turkey preparing the way for them; each tribe is to mourn apart, showing that each is to be located in its own district. In the 14th chapter we learn that the last great conflict is to be fought in Palestine itself. These words, no doubt, will be literally fulfilled: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth"—that is, the Lord Jesus—"and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." Here we have the description of the last great battle, which is called in the Apocalypse the great conflict of Armageddon; in which, (according to Ezekiel,) Gog, and Magog, and Meshech, and Tubal — language singularly apposite to Russia — shall come up against God's people, and seek to destroy Jerusalem, and to put an end to the fulfilment of a thou

sand brilliant promises scattered throughout the pages of inspiration. It may be said, "You cannot take these passages literally." The most minute predictions, however, relating to Christ's first advent were most literally fulfilled. We read, in the 22d Psalm, that "they parted my raiment, and for my vesture they cast lots." A mere philosopher reading that would say, "We cannot suppose that such a trifling thing will be literally fulfilled;" and yet we know that it was fulfilled to the very letter. So again, "Thy king cometh riding upon an ass." You would say, "That no doubt means that he will come in very great humility;" but it was literally fulfilled. And if these minute predictions respecting the minutest details of Christ's first advent were literally fulfilled, why should we suppose that the minute predictions respecting his second advent will not be as minutely fulfilled also? As I understand strictly and literally the predictions that have been strictly and literally fulfilled in the past, so I understand that God will literally gather all nations to Palestine. Everything is turning that way. What is the cause of the storm that has burst on the East, which statesmen have been mustering all their skill and ingenuity to conduct away? A quarrel about Palestine—about shrines and sacred places. At this moment that land is becoming the source of disquiet and conflict in the most powerful cabinets of the east and west of Europe. More recently the sufferings of the Jews in Jerusalem are exciting the sympathies of Christendom. May

not these events be the budding of the branch? "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;" but whether before or after the Jews are restored, I feel it difficult to decide. And the Lord shall be against these nations, by those that he brings forward; or it may be, by hail, by plague, by storm, by earthquake. "And his foot shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives." Is it unreasonable to conclude that he will as literally stand upon that mount as he stood upon Mount Calvary? If there be a better explanation, let us accept it. It does seem contradictory that we should take those prophecies literally that he has literally fulfilled, but the remaining prophecies not yet fulfilled figuratively and symbolically; at least, it does not seem consistent.

We have, therefore, in this 14th chapter, the gathering of all nations against Jerusalem; and we read, at the close of the chapter, of their utter destruction. In the 3d verse it is said, "The Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations." The 12th verse describes what shall befall them: "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and

his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen around about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Then we read, in the 9th verse: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner-gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

Now then, says the prophet, "In that day"—when all this shall be accomplished, Jerusalem rebuilt, Palestine restored, the glory of the Lord, like the shechinah of old, taking up its abode in the midst of it,—"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusa-

lem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." At that day which closes all the afflictions of time, and begins the dawn and morning of everlasting noon; when Christ shall come again, and shine before his ancients gloriously, and reign a Prince and a King in the midst of his people for ever and for ever—the commencement of the thousand years described in the Apocalypse — holiness to the Lord shall be upon everything in the height, everything in the depth, upon every heart, and hand, and forehead: and the whole earth shall be a holy and a beautiful offering to the Lord that made and redeemed it. "Holiness to the Lord," means properly and strictly, "sequestration," "separation," "division." It was stated before that the Hebrew word *Kadosh* means not only "holy," but also the very reverse, or "unholy." Its literal meaning is a thing devoted: if devoted to wickedness, it is still Kadosh; if devoted to goodness, it is still Kadosh. It is used like the Latin word *sacer*, which means sacred, and also wicked. The *auri sacra fames* does not mean "the holy thirst of gold," but "the accursed thirst of gold." The word in its original means simply dedication, division, separation, sequestration. Everything in that day—from the meanest article of furniture up to the cherubim that are beside the throne—shall be "Holiness to the Lord;" it means, that whatever be the excellence, the beauty, or the gifts of any creature, these shall no longer be squandered in the gratification of evil desires; but

shall all be consecrated, dedicated, and devoted, to the service of the Lord God of hosts. These words will then be no longer a duty to be done, but a fact actually accomplished: "Whatever you do, whether you even eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." Every person in that day — the day that I have endeavoured to fix and to determine—shall feel all the sacredness of a priest, all the responsibility of a servant, all the dignity of a king unto our God and his Christ. The lowliest things shall set forth his praise; the loftiest things shall reflect his glory; all that is little and all that is great shall be equally devoted, dedicated and separated, or be holiness to the Lord.

In order to illustrate this thought, we have only to look at what is the distinctive excellency of a thing, to see and anticipate the excellency that will be devoted and consecrated to God.

The whole Church of Christ shall then be "Holiness to the Lord." At present the visible Church is made up of tares and wheat; and every attempt that man has made to separate them has ended rather in multiplying than diminishing the tares and injuring the wheat. We are not to expect till "that day" a pure, and perfect, and spotless Church. But we are told that the Redeemer will present the Church to himself a holy Church — without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing. That is, the Church — now stained with a thousand sins, pervaded by imperfections of every sort — shall then be disinfected of all its evil, puri-

fied of all its dross, and presented to the Lord a holy Church—without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle, or any such thing—"Holiness to the Lord." Then the bride shall be clothed in her coronation robes, having made herself ready; then the new Jerusalem—no longer hidden in the distant skies, but revealed as the manifestation of the sons of God—shall come down from heaven bright like the sun, fair like the moon, terrible as an army with banners. Then the mystical hundred and forty-four thousand described in the Apocalypse shall be complete; all God's sons reclaimed, all God's people gathered home; and there shall be no more signs, because there is the substance; no more sacraments, because what is signified is revealed; no more prayer, for all shall be praise. And when angels witness the august offering, the holy spectacle, the redeemed Church, with the inscription on every brow, and the feeling in every heart, "Holiness to the Lord," they will ask, "Who are these, and whence came they? They are not natives; they are immigrants, they are colonists; they come from another country; they were not born here." "Lo, these are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they here present, therefore are they introduced here, and they serve him now day and night, without ceasing." The whole Church shall be "Holiness to the Lord."

When that day arrives, every place and portion of the earth shall be "Holiness to the Lord." It

has now its profane places, its bleak places, its desert places; but in that day, according to prophecy, its very deserts shall rejoice, its wilderness shall blossom even as the rose. There shall be no profane spot, no distinction between what is sacred and what is secular; the last fire shall have purified by its baptism the earth in which we live, its every mountain shall be holy as Mount Sion, blessed as Mount Gerizim, beautiful and radiant with light as Mount Tabor; all nature shall be the temple and the cathedral of God; every place shall be a sanctuary; every sound shall be a choral psalm; every audience a congregation; every crowd a Church; and thus the whole of space shall be inlaid with God, and all Nature, retuned, restored, regenerated, shall have inscribed upon her brow what the high priest had upon his mitre—"Holiness to the Lord."

When that day comes, every service shall also be "Holiness to the Lord." Man's labour shall be like Adam's in Paradise, refreshment and joy: our life shall be a ceaseless liturgy; our labour shall be a holy offering; our conversation instinct with the purest and the noblest thoughts; the present shall be all peace, the future shall be bright as hope, the review of the past shall only give us thankfulness, and the anticipation of the future shall only give us joy. In that day, when all things are reinstated and restored — in the millennial era — there may be all that we have now, but disinfected, purified, ennobled, invested with a

grandeur and a magnificence of which we have no conception now. The sower may still sow, but in sure hope; the reaper may still reap, but in ecstacy and in joy. We must not etherealize the future; we are to have bodies, though resurrection bodies; we are to live upon this orb, though a re-baptized and regenerated orb; we shall be men as we are now; and much, perhaps, that science discloses, that genius strikes out, that we regard as our privileges, our blessings, the elements of our greatness, may, being purified and consecrated, and having stamped upon them, "Holiness to the Lord," continue in the beautiful age that is to come; that day when the Lord shall reign on Mount Zion, and shine before his ancients gloriously.

In that day, every house and dwelling shall no more be common and profane, but "Holiness to the Lord." The head of the house shall be the high priest to offer up the prayers and the praises of the group that is around him. Wherever smoke ascends, or a heart beats, or a family congregates, shall be "Holiness to the Lord." Daily bread shall be eaten like sacramental bread; the table of God's providence shall be holy as the table of the Lord: the Church shall be in the house, and the house shall be in the Church; and the humblest furniture within shall be holy as the ark, beautiful as the cherubim and the glory that was between; for on the very "bells of the horses," and humblest furniture of the humblest household, shall be in-

scribed, what shall be struck into its very nature—"Holiness to the Lord."

In that day, every day shall be a Sabbath. At present we have week-days and Sabbath-days; but then devotion shall be a ceaseless feeling, praise shall be a daily song; there will be no local temple, there will be no statedly recurring Sabbaths. The Sabbath is not abolished in the age to come any more than it was when the Jewish passed into the Christian; but on the contrary, is expanded, made more beautiful, and, if possible, more holy; for there remaineth for the people of God what we have translated "a rest," but what Paul calls a σαββασμὸς, that is, a "Sabbath-keeping for the people of God." The whole age to come is Sabbath; the whole Millennium is a thousand years of Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath passed into the Christian, purified and enlarged; and the Christian Sabbath shall pass into the Millennium, and be the ceaseless Sabbath, or rest that remains for the people of God.

In that day, every one of the brute creation then living shall be "Holiness to the Lord." They were so originally; God made every creature, from the emmet to the eagle — from the insect in the sunbeam to the elephant and the leviathan — and having made them, he pronounced them "very good." It is true, disorder, discord, and evil have been introduced; but these were not originally. Man, creation's lord, fell, and all nature felt the shock; man — the representative of all — sinned,

and all he represented and headed fell with him, and felt the consequences. But in that day, when all things shall be restored, the fierce passions of the beasts of the forest shall be quenched: "the lion," in the language of prophecy, "shall eat straw like the ox, and a little child"—as if to show the gentleness of the lion's nature — "shall lead them." All this is not figurative, but literal. Why should we conclude it is not literal when prophecies more minute have been literally fulfilled? We cannot conceive that in Paradise the lion preyed upon the lamb, or that the wild beast tore in pieces the creatures that came within his reach. I know how difficult it is to meet the objection that the sceptic adduces, that the lion is made clearly by his physical organization carnivorous, just as the ox is by his physical organization clearly graminivorous; but no doubt the proper way to look at it is, that God created them prospectively. How long Adam stood — whether six days, or six months, or six years—we do not know; but this we may conclude, that God made things prospectively. God knew Adam was not to stand, and Adam's fall was but a step in a grand stage — while Adam had all the guilt, and God none of the responsibility. That was the cause of that grand fact that Christ should suffer, and enter into glory. Contemplating this— the great and momentous event — God made the creatures (and we can only suppose this, for we have no evidence to educe) prospectively, with reference to how they should live, and where they

should live, when they should fall with Adam, and come under the evil and accursed influence of sin and death, and all their woe. But surely no man in his senses can suppose that God made one beast to devour another, and that it was part and parcel of the original economy. Nobody will surely conclude that a God of infinite beneficence, who could have arranged otherwise, has made one creature stronger to prey upon the flesh of the other. There are traits in the New Testament that point out a contrary conclusion; and reason — not reason outside of Scripture, but supported and sustained by Scripture — must come to the conclusion that all was made in harmony, in peace, in concord, with man and with each other; and only when sin, the rending element, was introduced, did creation fly into pieces, and every creature feel its heart instinct with evil passions, appetites, and desires.

But, above all, do we believe that in that day shall man be restored again to his original supremacy? In that day man shall be like the high priest — "Holiness to the Lord;" and surely the restoration of Adam involves the restoration of all his dependencies. Creation fell with him; creation shall be restored with him. Nature suffered the shock of his sin; why should not nature participate in the glories of his restoration? If the head is lifted into the sunshine, why should not all around and within its reach participate of the same blessing also? I regard man as the master of the rest of creation; and that he will be reinstated in a

richer Paradise than that from which he was expelled, and shall be surrounded with a happier and a more beautiful family of animated beings than that which went to war with him when he broke out in war with and rebellion against God; and that he shall once more be the priest of nature, to lift up her ceaseless praises; the King of nature, to govern all; his intellect no more liable to error, his heart no more the seat of passions; no tears to channel his cheeks, no pains to oppress his heart, no signs or symptoms of decay, or anything to indicate that he is not restored to that perfect consecration which he possessed in Paradise—"Holiness to the Lord."

And this earth itself shall be completely restored. At the Fall this earth was like an island struck off by a sudden blow; or rather like a gigantic landslip from the continent of heaven; it set out under another attraction, and if God did not restrain it, it would plunge into everlasting darkness, and misery, and woe. But in that day this prodigal orb of ours shall return once more to her Father's house, and shall again appear in the beautiful sisterhood of stars, and orbs, and systems that never fell; and reflect in richer lustre, and celebrate in grander songs, the praises of him that made it, and the mercies of him that redeemed it by his blood, and has engraved upon it, as the brightest jewel in his diadem, "Holiness to the Lord." Satan shall be cast out of it; he has a footing on it, and his footing on it is the secret of much of its uneasiness

and its disquiet. Satan is the prince of the power of the air; a usurper that is permitted to be here, but who has no right nor proper jurisdiction here; the great disturber of the world, the great democrat and anarchist of mankind, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, but doomed to be cast out.

And sin shall also be cast out of this world. Sin explains all its uneasiness: it is in nature precisely what fever is in the human body. All our trials—all our griefs, our sorrows, our discords—are the progeny and offspring of sin. Its trail, like the foul trail of the old serpent, may be traced upon the fairest flowers and loveliest landscapes—corroding, vexing, irritating, disturbing. Plague, pestilence, famine, battle, war, are the footsteps of sin—the influences it leaves behind it, the crops it sows broadcast while it passes through the world; but it shall have passed to its doom, when this world shall be "Holiness to the Lord." And disease and death shall be cast out, because sin has been previously cast out. Disease is not natural; death is not natural; pain is not natural. We fancy these things are natural; but they are most unnatural. Man was never made to weep, let the poet say what he please: man was never meant to die; he was made holy; he was therefore immortal; and if sin had not scathed him, death had never touched him. But when sin is cast out, and the consecrating footfall of Jesus is heard in dewy morn and peaceful eve, disease will disappear, death will dis-

appear, tears will disappear. There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor weeping; for all the former things have passed away. Grey hairs are, no doubt, picturesque; and poets may so represent them, but it is the picturesqueness, notwithstanding, of death. The autumn tints are very beautiful, and poets may sing them; but they are the evidences of approaching decay. Nature tries to gild what sin has left as the evidence of its presence, but it is in vain. No decay, no death, no disease, was meant to be originally; and they are now because sin has entered, and death by sin. Everywhere there is the evidence of this. One almost wonders that a human being can deny the Fall. I cannot see wisdom—I cannot see common sense—in any other conclusion, than that the picture in Genesis is the portrait of actual fact. There is not a home that has not its shadow; there is not a heart that has not its hidden griefs; there is not a frame—the healthiest on earth—that is not penetrated by many a pang.

"There is no flock, however tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But hath one vacant chair.

"The air is full of farewells of the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted."

And what does this prove but that sin hath entered, and death by sin? In that day, when holiness shall be stamped upon all created things—and the whole of this world, with its moral, its social, its physical, its animate and inanimate life, shall have engraved upon it, "Holiness to the Lord"—Paradise shall return in richer beauty than the Paradise that Adam lost. The trees of every forest, like harp-strings swept by the wind, shall chant God's praise, as "Holiness to the Lord;" the rivers as they roll sparkling to the sea, and the waves of the ocean as they beat upon a thousand shores, shall sing, "Holiness to the Lord;" the flowers of every place, and of every season of the year, shall exhale their fragrance as their best tribute, "Holiness to the Lord:" the desert and the wilderness shall lay aside their sorrowful apparel, and put on more than the glory of Eden, holiness to him that reconsecrates them again: the springs of earth shall leap up and welcome the light of that better Sun. Language shall no more be the vehicle of falsehood, but of truth; music shall no more be a plaything, but the solemn and grand expression of God's praise; poetry shall no more gild a lie, but be devoted to God's glory; and all that man is, and all that is around man, and all that man knows, shall receive its consecration, "Holiness to the Lord."

Let us look forward with joyous hope, with holy and exulting expectancy, to a day when all wrongs shall be righted; when the lost and severed shall

meet again, and creation be restored to more than its first beauty; and man, who has wept, and mourned, and suffered, and died for six thousand years, shall suffer, and mourn, and die no more.

Are we individually now—not yet in fact, but in destiny—"Holiness to the Lord?" Is it our desire to be set apart to him, and for him, and for his glory? Do we attach any meaning to the text, "Whether ye eat, or drink, do all to the glory"—that is, receive all as engraven with "Holiness to the Lord?" What is your name? "Christian." And what is meant by "Christian?" A consecrated person. It is not the minister that is set apart only; it is the people also. When you are baptized as children, you are outwardly set apart, but no more; but when the Holy Spirit regenerates your heart, you are inwardly set apart with "Holiness to the Lord." Do you then seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness—not only, but chiefly? Religion is not the only thing; trade, profession, are also duties; and what we ask men to do is, not to make religion, worship, the Bible, the only things; but to make them the dominant, the leading, the governing things. We do not ask you to cease to be men, in order to become Christians; but to be Christian men, and to feel that your destiny, as it ought to be your aspiration in the present, is "Holiness to the Lord."

But you cannot consecrate yourselves. The high priest could not consecrate himself; he needed to be consecrated by the mysterious and inimitable

oil, that it was death for any man to make, or even to try to imitate; you need to be consecrated by an unction from the Holy One. The Holy Spirit is the Anointer, the Consecrator of the people of God: he engraves the signet of the heart with the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." Justified by Christ, we may be consecrated by his Holy Spirit. Purchased by Christ's blood, we are to be set apart by Christ's Spirit. The blood of Christ is on the believer, that he may be redeemed from the curse; the unction of the Spirit is in the believer, that he may be "Holiness to the Lord;" Christ's righteousness your title before the Lord; holiness to the Lord your consecration for his service, and to his praise and glory.

Are we thus justified? are we thus consecrated? Let us seek to aspire to this. Let us pray that we may rise to a right apprehension of our grandeur, not by nature, but by grace; and of our destiny in that day, the first beams of which begin to sprinkle the distant east, giving token of its speedy approach, when the very bells of the horses, and the humblest vessels in the humblest household, shall be "Holiness to the Lord."

> One song employs all nations, and all cry,
> Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!
> The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
> Shout to each other; and the mountain-tops
> From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
> Till nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.
> Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;

See Salem built, the city of our God!
Bright as the sun, the sacred city shines:
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her—unbounded is her joy—
Praises in all her gates—upon her walls,
And on her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard Salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the furthest West,
And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand
And worships. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Zion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never—such as heaven stoops down to see.

IX.

IT IS DONE.

THE words of the Son of God, "It is done," pronounced toward the close of the Apocalyptic drama, seem to be the echoes of words uttered on the cross. "It is finished," closed the sacrifice; "It is done," winds up its magnificent results. What was then finished in the shape of purchase, shall on the arrival of this era be historically perfected and confirmed. The words, clearly retrospective in their bearing, will prove to the listening universe that every promise and prophecy enunciated by God in his holy Word will then and there be completed and fulfilled.

When Jesus said upon the cross, "It is finished," he implied that all that related to his agony, as a fact, had been then consummated; when Jesus says on his throne of glory, "It is done," or, "It is finished," it will show that all that relates to his glory then and there has come to pass. The first was uttered from the lips of the Man of sorrows; the last will be enunciated by Him on whose head are many crowns, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings. As sure as he drank the bitter cup, and finished the curse, and made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, so sure shall

he wear many crowns, sway the sceptre of a universal majesty, reign in each heart, and rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the utmost ends of the earth.

Let us notice very briefly, not much in detail, some of those great truths that shall be translated into facts when Christ comes the second time, without sin unto salvation, to receive a kingdom, and to reign for ever. First, then, the promise proclaimed in Paradise will then and there be perfected in all respects—"The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head." These words are not yet fully accomplished. Satan fell like lightning from the heavens, ere Christ left the earth; but Satan still, however shackled and limited in his aggression, walks the world, its untiring foe, and goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Satan is crippled, but he is not yet crushed. His power is broken, but the remnant of his sceptre is still mighty upon earth. But when Christ shall come again, this Angel coming down from heaven shall lay hold upon Satan, that "old serpent," and bind him in chains for a thousand years; and after the respite that he has—or, if I may use the words, enjoys, for sin is his only enjoyment, and to injure is the only happiness he knows—after the thousand years shall have run their course, and he shall have again gathered them that dwell in the four parts of the earth, to assail the people and the saints of the Most High, he will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, and be there with the

beast tormented for ever and ever. Then the promises, which had their birth and began to be fulfilled at the cross, shall be seen fully actualised beside the throne in the Millennial glory; and that promise which sounded so musical amid the wrecks of Paradise—an earnest of which was given on the cross by the lips of Him who was the subject of the promise—shall be seen in all its perfection and complete accomplishment, when Satan shall be banished from the earth he has desecrated so long, and man shall be delivered from the aggressions of that "old serpent," that foul fiend, whose trail and poison are traceable in the sins and crimes that have stained the annals and disfigured the history of mankind. "It shall be done," was the ancient promise; "It is done," will be answered in endless and responsive reverberations.

The promise made to Abraham so often, and in such varied and expressive terms, will also be fulfilled. God said to Abraham, after he had shown him his readiness to offer up Isaac: "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Abraham waits and looks in heaven for the fulfilment of that promise. It is not yet actual; there is only an earnest and a foretaste of it. Abraham still looks from his starry throne for the city that hath founda-

tions; he still anticipates the true Canaan, the promised rest — in this very orb—that remains for the people of God; and though perfectly happy, he feels that his happiness will not have reached its culminating greatness until the dead dust that sleeps in the cave of Mamre shall be reknit to the soul that worships with the cherubim beside the throne; and he shall see literally a great multitude that no man can number, praising God and the Lamb, and at last be told by Him who is faithful and true, "Abraham, here is the promise unspent in the lapse of six thousand years, now fulfilled in all nations blessed in Christ; thy seed multiplied like the stars in the firmament above thee, and like the sands on the sea shore beneath thy feet." How faithful is God! Are not all his promises yea and amen in Christ Jesus?

The precious promise made to the Messiah will then be fulfilled by the everlasting Father. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," will also be fulfilled. All that he now sees is a handful, though that handful be an earnest. A mere minute minority of the population of the earth profess Christianity externally, and a still smaller section of the outward professing Church feel Christianity experimentally. It cannot, therefore, be said that Christ has yet seen all the fruits of his sore agony and painful travail. He has seen enough to satisfy that the whole will be; the first-fruits already wave before him, but the full harvest alone will satisfy him. Jesus will not have

found the full purchase of his travail, nor will he have seen the whole fruits of "his agony and bloody sweat," until his Church be complete in character and in number, and Christ have the pre-eminence over all the earth, and all be blessed in him, and all shall call him blessed. Calvary will have its complement on Mount Zion — the sorrows of the cross will be more than compensated by the glories of that crown. Jesus shall then see that he died not in vain—that not a handful, but a mighty multitude, are the product of his sorrows, and the purchase of his blood. It was for this — the joy set before him, and soon to be his possession — that he endured the cross, despising the shame.

When Christ shall say, "It is done," it seems to be implied that all the promises made to the Church of Christ, as to her future glory and perfection, will then be fulfilled. We cannot read Isaiah without noticing predictions respecting the Church of the future, so brilliant that no admissible approximation to them ever seems to have taken place since first they were uttered. We are constrained to admit that those bright promises relate to a coming era — that the world to come will be the theatre of their development — that that bright scene delineated so vividly and so often — is the time when the Church shall arise and shine, and put on her beautiful garments, and her righteousness break forth like brightness, and her salvation like a lamp that burneth; and she shall be presented to Christ, no longer a weeping and sorrow-

stricken follower, but a glorious Church—without wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing—a bride ready in her bridal and coronation robes, glorious and spotless, bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and majestic as an army with banners. The Church, the bride, shall be complete in her character, complete in her constituent numbers—a perfect Church, the bride of the great Bridegroom.

At that day the Jews will be restored, and reinstated in their lost privileges. It is impossible to read Isaiah without seeing that while many of the prophecies—and those by no means obscure ones—describe the future glory of the Gentile Church, the very choicest and most brilliant of them all are descriptive of the future glory of the Jewish Church. The Jews had the pre-eminence at first, and we gather from all ancient prophecies that they will have the pre-eminence again. The dry bones, scattered over all the valleys of the earth (exceeding many and exceeding dry), the types and symbols of the children of Israel, shall hear the sound of the resurrection trumpet, and shall come, bone to bone, and sinew to sinew, and shall be clothed with resurrection flesh; and rise up, a glorious army, a mighty host, singing and shouting in undying strains, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" And of that very Jewish Church it is said: "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet: and

they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." We gather, from all these predictions, that the Jews will occupy a very prominent place in the age to come. The words in the Hebrew, called "the world to come," ought to be translated, "the dispensation to come;" in which they that have suffered so long — most deservedly suffered—will be more than compensated; so that they may sing now, with an emphasis with which the Gentile cannot say it, "Our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."

At that day, the promises of the new heaven and the new earth, as these are enunciated in the Epistle of Peter, shall be all realized. "The day of the Lord will come," he says, "as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth." What promise is this? That promise which Peter recognised, which is still unspent, but which Peter believed to be reserved for the future, is contained in the 65th chapter of Isaiah,

at the 17th verse, where we have the promise given in full, graphic, eloquent, and expressive terms: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem"—in that new heaven and new earth—"a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed." Whether that relates to the Millennial state, prior to this continuity of it, which is to last for ever, it is difficult to say; or whether it is to be translated figuratively, meaning that in this future state there shall be no death at all. Some have supposed that in the Millennial state, the first thousand years of it, there will be deaths. I cannot see how this is possible among the people of God: they are in their resurrection bodies. If death takes place, it must be among those who are spoken of as at the four corners of the globe, unconverted and unsanctified, called Gog and Magog, who rise up at the end, in rebellion against the saints and the people of the Most High. But I incline to take the language as figurative in this part: "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the

fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat." It is said, in the 24th verse: "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Nobody can assert that this has been fulfilled. No era that has occurred from the day when Isaiah uttered this — that is, 700 years before the death of Christ to the present moment—can be said with any propriety to have been even an approximation to this glowing prophecy — no such era has ever yet taken place; and we are sure it had not taken place before Peter's days, for he says, "We, according to his promise" — the promise we have just seen — "look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." That promise, therefore, relates to a future in which everything shall be actually fulfilled. That there are difficulties connected with every view of unfulfilled prophecy it is perfectly reasonable to suppose; so there are in every other interpretation. The question is, in which view is the greatest amount of difficulty? On the side of those who believe the Millennium is to be a mere improvement and expansion of the existing age, to be followed by the last judgment, it does look as if the difficulties were insurmountable; on the side of those who believe that the advent of Christ is to be pre-Millennial,

there are difficulties, no doubt, but these are few in comparison with those that cling to the other view. If all the future were as luminous as the present, man would cease to be responsible; but we can see only gleams and glimpses of the future by the light that God has given, and we must not expect to penetrate futurity — even where God has revealed it—and find a transparency and clearness that are the attributes of the present only. But is it impossible to conclude that the lion will eat straw like the ox? — that literally the lamb and the lion shall feed together, and dust be the serpent's meat? These animals, at present in an abnormal and unnatural state, were not meant to be voracious and to devour in their original condition. True, the physiologist and the naturalist will appeal to their internal visceral structure, and to the organization of their teeth, and will assert that they were made to live upon other animals. God made them clearly in anticipation of what afterward took place; for we cannot suppose that a Being who saw what would be, would fail to make pre-arrangements for the new and unnatural phasis that was to come upon the earth. It is not at all probable that after the Fall the lion ceased to have graminivorous teeth, or exchanged them for carnivorous: we have no evidence of such a transformation. The lion was made with his carnivorous teeth before the Fall, but in anticipation of a new state of things. The Fall did not come upon God unexpectedly; he knew and embraced it as a fact, in all his pre-

arrangements and economy for the future; and so this animal organization was made and instituted by God specially to provide for what would be, but still for a state of which God himself was not the Author, and for which he is not responsible. Paradise was nature — the present earth is not.

"It is done." The new heavens will take the place of the old: the new earth will emerge from its flood of flame — beautiful, pure, and holy: the desert will rejoice, and blossom as the rose: the creation shall be the consecrated floor of a sublime temple: and this very orb itself shall be the high altar, amid the orbs of the universe, where God's glory shall be seen in far richer splendour than ever shone between the cherubim; and man's true greatness shall be realized, as it was when man was made in the image of God in Paradise — holy, and without spot, and without sin.

"It is done." The first resurrection from the dead will take place. At the commencement of the Millennial state, the dead in Christ rise first. This is the prophecy of every prophet; it was the expectation of apostles, evangelists, and saints; it was the prayer of Paul. "If by any means I may attain unto that resurrection, that one from among the dead." And when Christ shall say, "It is done," then the saints shall be raised; the dust of every silent urn shall be quickened, the remains that are scattered through the depths of the restless and the unfathomed sea—the dust that lies beneath the green hillock, and in marble mausolea, and

under monuments of brass—all, in the height and in the depth, in the land and in the sea—shall hear the voice of earth's great Creator and Redeemer, and come forth, and particle to particle rejoin each other, and clothe anew, beautiful, perfect, and holy, that soul that mourned over its imperfections on earth, but now rejoices in its recovered glory, and is holy and satisfied for ever.

At that era, the prophecy in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians will be fulfilled. Many persons quote that prophecy of the resurrection as if it were already fulfilled. We read in the 54th verse, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Now, that is not yet fulfilled. When the believer dies, he may sing that song as an anticipatory anthem, but not as a result actually done; for this triumphant song shall be sung only at that hour when, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed: "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" In other words, death shall be cast with hell into the lake of fire. There shall be no more dying. Our triumph over the grave shall be unequivocal; our victory over death shall be entire; then we may begin our song of

triumph and defiance, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" All graves are closed; the palm waves where the cypress grew; death is destroyed; all things are become new.

Then shall be fulfilled all the benedictions contained in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. "Blessed are the pure in heart;" that is their present joy, but their full reward is, "they shall see God." Blessed are they that mourn;" that is, there is a blessing in their tears, notwithstanding their tears, more than a compensation for their suffering; but in the future it is, "for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are the meek;" their meekness may be trodden down on earth, but there is a blessing even here in developing such a character, and "they shall inherit the earth." These blessings are realized now; but the promises attached to the blessings will only be reaped when Christ shall pronounce, from the throne from which he makes all things new, "It is done." "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this resurrection." "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The whole earth will then be covered with his glory. Psalm lxxii., now written in the Bible, will then be visible and audible upon the length and breadth of God's created world. "All shall bless him, and all shall be blessed in him. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who only doeth

wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory." That is the petition and the prophecy of David. When Christ shall say, "It is done," the last verse will be felt true: "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are fulfilled." The prayers of the literal David are closed, and the praises of the children of the true David are begun. David says, My prayers shall only cease to be offered up when the whole earth shall be filled with Christ's glory. Christ will say, "It is done;" then, in the Millennial state, the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. Now, the heathen are not yet Christ's actual inheritance; now, the uttermost parts of the earth are not his literal possession; then, they shall strictly and literally be so. Every thought in man's mind shall be light, every affection of man's heart shall be purity, every pulse in man's heart shall be music, every nerve in man's nature shall thrill with joy; the whole sky shall glow with ceaseless sunshine, and the whole earth be covered with the glory of Him whose glory makes pale the brightness of the sun, and dim the light of the moon, who is the Temple of the universe, wherein is no need of the sun nor of the moon; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof.

Then, also, when Christ shall say, "It is done," shall be fulfilled Christ's prayer, which never yet has been fulfilled: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all that shall believe in me through their

preaching, that they all may be one, even as I am in thee, and thou in me, that the world may know that thou hast sent me." That prophecy will not be fulfilled till Christ says, "It is done." Then the Church of Christ shall be Catholic, not Romish; then she will have unity, not uniformity; then she will have apostolic truth in her creed, and apostolic holiness in her character; there will not be a single section, nor a single division or disunion in the New Jerusalem — the bride, the Lamb's wife, the company that constitute the Church and the people of God.

Then heaven and earth shall be reunited. Earth is a fragment broken off from the continent of eternity by sin. Severed from that great continent, it has remained — except by a bridge, a pathway, like Jacob's ladder, that unites them, and along which we can travel. But as long as the pathway is — as long as a Mediator exists, discharging mediatorial functions—so long there is separation; but when this new state shall come, the earth, the broken-off island, shall be reknit to the great continent of heaven, and constitute together one great realm, bearing the traces of its past history, because the trophies of Christ's triumph, but yet part and parcel of the great realm and continent of glory, of light, of life.

We shall see the explanation and the solution of all the difficulties that perplex us. Many things we now read in the Bible, many providential occurrences befall us, that we cannot now explain.

Why is that one so smitten? Why is some other so great a sufferer? Here is a bereavement shrouded in mystery. I cannot see why death entered and crossed my threshold, and crossed it more than once. I cannot see why losses, affliction, sorrow, suffering, have all been poured into my cup. It is inexplicable now. I can bear it, but I cannot explain it. When Christ shall say, "It is done," then those things that we know not now, we shall know hereafter; and you will feel, what now you hope, that the sorest trial was as necessary for your salvation as that Christ should die upon the cross, and redeem you by his blood; that not an incident or accident that has befallen you could have been left out, without a link being taken from the chain that lifts you from the footstool, and places you beside the throne. There will be then a solution of difficulties we cannot now explain—of perplexities we cannot now unravel—of experiences we cannot now fathom, and in the light in which Christ is we shall see and understand all things clearly; and we shall thank God that He refused many a prayer we offered, as we shall praise Him that He answered many an unworthy petition He himself inspired; and we shall marvel in the light that reveals all, and the splendour that solves all, and hesitate to decide whether God showed us greater mercy in not answering, or in answering, many a prayer that we presented to Him. We shall praise God in louder tones, and with more joyous hearts, for what He did not give, though

we asked it, than for what He did give in answer to our earnest petitions.

In that blessed state we shall meet, and recognise, and spend a joyful eternity with those we were severed from on earth. It is impossible to believe that those images of the departed dead that are treasured up in memory, as in a picture-gallery, are to be expunged, and their memories cease for ever. Yes, they will be expunged, they will be forgotten; but it will be the images dissolving in the presence of the originals; it will be recollection fading before the actual presence of those we need no more to recollect, because we see them face to face. Then links wanting in domestic chains will be restored—those that are not lost, but gone before, will meet us — "and death-divided friends," in the language of the beautiful paraphrase, "at last shall meet to part no more." We cannot suppose that we shall meet in heaven and not know each other: this seems impossible. There are — to use a strange word, but the only word that is applicable in every man's mind, as in every man's body — certain idiosyncrasies which constitute his personal identity. Let us refer to the most intimate friends that we have. We could suppose them unclothed, their bodies lying in the tomb, and their spirits only holding communion with us — yet we should know them. There is a tone of thought, a peculiarity of mental structure — idiosyncrasies of soul, and spirit, and heart in

each—that together constitute his identity so truly, that I could recognise him, not by his outward form, which is only the visible development, but by his inner, moral nature, which really and truly constitutes the man. So that even in heaven the disembodied spirits that are before the throne recognise each other; and far happier meetings than ever were permitted on earth take place there. But that recognition will be more perfect when the mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility; and the features that so gladdened us by their smile below, will be seen in a purer, holier, and happier realm; and friend recount to friend, as the Israelites did when they met together, all the way that God led them for so many years: and how they were led through the desert, and kept the faith, and now wear, as the evidence and the proof of it, a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

When Christ shall cry, "It is done," God will be glorified as He never was before. Now God is glorified by the cross really, but not to the same extent in which He will be glorified when Christ shall wear the crown. To glorify God is not to add anything to God, but simply to let Him be known. A finite being is glorified by having something added to him, but an infinite Being is glorified just by being revealed. The clearest apocalypse of Deity is the greatest glory to Deity. God is now seen in the cross, in the Scriptures, in

the experience of saints; but then He will be seen by the greatest number, surrounded with the greatest glory; and the song that rose from angel lips, and has been uttered with stammering tongues for eighteen hundred years, shall then be lifted up by a mighty multitude, as the sound of many waters and of mighty thunders: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." "It is done." "I am Alpha and Omega. Behold I make all things new."

X.

THE LORD REIGNETH.

WHAT a blessed thought is embosomed in the Psalmist's words! One can see that the world would soon be reduced to chaos if any one swayed the sceptre except Him who is the Lord of heaven and of earth, the God, the Maker, and the Governor of all. Suppose these words, "The Lord reigneth," were translated into modern speech; suppose we read, or rather that we heard from heaven, ringing as a divine communication that we could not but believe, "The Autocrat of all the Russias reigneth." Europe would be an aceldama, earth a desert, despotism would be supreme, and abject physical and moral slavery would be the portion of the largest part of the earth. Or, suppose the words were, "The Sultan reigneth." We might have a little more civil freedom, but we should have no more religious comfort. The Crescent would supplant the Cross, the Koran would take the place of that pure and beautiful document the Bible; and the cimeter or the tribute would be the alternatives presented by the mufti, and extortion, oppression, or subjection, would be the portion of all the inhabitants of Asia and of Europe together. Or suppose that the words were, "The

Pope reigneth—Pio Nono reigneth." Would this be any comfort? If I had the choice, I would rather it was the Sultan than the Pope; I had almost rather be a Mahometan than a Romanist; for bad as the Mahometans are, there is no idolatry among them: they worship one God; even Mahomet is not their God, he is only their prophet; and the singular and the peculiar character of the mission of Mahomet was, when it first burst upon Europe and upon Asia, to punish the idolatrous nations of Christendom, and to save the world from the universal curse of idolatry. But if Pio Nono reigned — alas, alas! we should have the Crucifix, but not the Cross; we should have the priest to make an atonement instead of the ambassador of God to proclaim it already made; our nobles would be cardinals in red, our Bible would be clasped, our Prayer-book would be the missal; and our Queen—when Pio Nono felt it his interest or his passion to attempt it—like a previous possessor of a throne, would be paying Peter-pence for her sovereignty; or, like the German Emperor, standing in the trenches around Rome, doing penance, and seeking from a man absolution from her transgressions. Or suppose that the laws of a material philosophy reigned; matters would not be mended. We should not know what to expect, we should not be able to interpret the least, or the most perplexing, or the plainest phenomena; all would be committed to blind chance, all would be under the laws of an unbending and an iron des-

potism; prayer would be useless, hope would be impossible; we could only sit down like the ancient stoic, and conclude it was a virtue not to feel, and seek in suicide a refuge from the calamities and the cares of life.

But what a blessed thought! It is not the Autocrat, nor the Sultan, nor Pio Nono, nor iron and hard and unbending law; but it is, "The Lord, our Father, reigneth; our covenant God reigneth;" therefore what He does will be in mercy, what He decides will be in wisdom. The mightiest things shall praise Him, the least things shall honour Him, and all things shall obey his will, and promote his glory, and execute the great and beneficent ends which He contemplates in the government and arrangement of the world.

It is interesting to notice a contrast in two Psalms. In the 97th Psalm it is, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth — the land, Palestine, the place of his own people—rejoice." But in the 99th Psalm a different deduction is made from the same premise: "The Lord reigneth; let the people" (*goim*) — the nations, the heathen — "tremble." "The Lord reigneth," is to his own people the richest comfort; "The Lord reigneth," is to the enemies of God the greatest calamity. "The Lord reigneth" is to his own people the greatest comfort, because it teaches them there is no chance. What kind of a sceptre would that be which had subjects that could resist it? What a governor of the world would he be who was dependent on the fixity or

fugitive changes of things for the accomplishment of his purposes? The least incident that befalls the obscurest saint in the deepest underground cellar of London is as much the mission, and as completely beneath the control of God, as is the flight of the soaring angel that is about his throne, or the mission of an apostle or an evangelist to preach the gospel to all mankind. That blow that swept away the property your industry had amassed was from Him: that chasm which the loss of the near and dear has left irremediable behind was from Him. A Father's hand inflicts the severest blow; paternal love is in every suffering. You are not to argue, "I suffer, therefore God hates me;" but "God is my Father, therefore all that he does co-operates for good, works together beneficently to me, and for glory, honour, and praise to his name." I know not a truth more precious in the Psalms than this, "The Lord reigneth." How delightful to look abroad upon the world, to listen to the preparations at Plymouth, and Portsmouth, and Devonport; to hear the moving and arranging, and gathering together of vast armies, and to know that God's eyes see all—that those great men that are moving them are all carrying out what he designs, and that not one can take a step on earth that had not first its decision in heaven! "The Lord reigneth." There is no chance, there is no accident.

Let the man whose biography has been the barest, whose life has had the fewest eddies and

the least startling incidents, look back, and he will see that upon the turning of a corner depended the complexion of a lifetime — that upon an accidental meeting, or an accidental occasion, with an unexpected person, depended all he now is, much he now feels, and more he now hopes for. It was the turning of a straw that brought one into contact with that truth which has made him a new man — it was an incidental conversation in a railway carriage, in a steamboat, in an omnibus, or some news-room, that brought another where was heard the Gospel, that will add one to the choirs of the blessed, and give a home of happiness and joy beyond the stars. If you can prove to me that God does not reign in little things, I will prove to you, with demonstration irrefragable, that there is no God at all. I say, if God does not reign and rule in the least incident that happens to a believer, God does not reign and rule at all. Whilst I use means wherever means are suggested by what is part of Christianity, common sense — while I employ every effort to promote my health, and every means within my power to perpetuate my life, and avoid every peril that would in the least degree endanger it — yet I am just as sure as I am of my own existence, that I am immortal till I have finished the work that God has given me to do. There is not a soldier upon eastern plains that has not a mission; and as soon only as his sword has executed God's behest, he will be removed from the field of conflict below, if a Christian, to the realms of everlasting repose

above. It may be thought a vulgar aphorism, but it is a most just one—"Every bullet has its billet;" and it is neither the Autocrat, nor the Sultan, nor chance, that writes the name upon the bullet; it is our Father who is in heaven: for "the Lord reigneth." The Lord reigns in the Baltic, he reigns in the Euxine, amid showers of balls, amid the roar of cannon; and there is not an accidental ball that accidentally hits a single soldier; there is not an accidental stroke that accidentally overtakes a single sailor; all is settled, all is adjusted, before the years of time began to roll. What a comfort is this! When the soldier goes forth into the field he may carry with him this absolute assurance, "My days were numbered long ago, and if I am to finish them here it must be so; if not, I am in the care and in the providential keeping of my Father, who reigneth." Yet this is not fatalism. The fatalism of the Moslem folds its hands, gathers round it its mantle, sits down, and says, "It is God's decree; we are to do nothing." But the trust of the Christian has recourse to every energy, and effort, and reasonable means, and employs for defence what God in his providence puts within his power; and the soldier that believes that his life is in God's keeping is not the less heroic on the field, or the less composed in the hour of battle and of conflict. Carry with you, then, into the chambers of the sick, feel beside the pillows of the dying, enjoy in the vigils of the long and the weary night, carry into all your trials, remember in all your

tribulations, "The Lord reigneth;" that there is no chance, no accident; that all is right, and all must resolve itself into the greatest glory to Him that reigns, and into the greatest good of the subjects that obey.

God has been ruling and reigning ever since the world had a being. Merle D'Aubigné has made the remark — a remark which I tried several years ago to illustrate,—"God is in history; and all history has its unity, because God is in it." Read Macaulay, or Alison, or D'Aubigné — ever recollecting at the commencement and the close of every chapter, "The Lord reigneth"—and you will see that where they are faithful, they are simply witnesses to the grand and the blessed fact.

Let us review some instances. In one of the Gospels it is stated, "A decree went out from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be taxed." That was an ordinary political decree; every one, as the effect of it, we are told in Luke ii., went to his own city to be taxed. We can see nothing in that decree at first glance — nothing seemed more ordinary. But when we come to compare the fact that Cæsar commanded with a prophecy that God had written, we find Cæsar's decree, accomplishing Cæsar's end, was really subserving God's great purpose, and that it was by this decree of the heathen ruler that Mary and Joseph went to their own city, and that the ancient prophecy was fulfilled, "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of

Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

At the day of Pentecost, nothing was more accidental apparently to the world than that there should be a vast assemblage of Jews at Jerusalem. On that very occasion the Holy Spirit was poured out, and they that came to make market learned what Christ had done; the merchants from the ends of the earth went back from the scene bearing merchandise more precious than gold and pearls; and the result of that Pentecostal effusion in the midst of the vast congress that had come together upon mere matters of business, was, that the Gospel was carried forth from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth; and nations that had never heard it before, heard and received, and welcomed the joyful sound.

On a subsequent occasion the apostle Paul was so persecuted by the Scribes and the Pharisees, that he was seized as a criminal, cast as a prisoner into a gaol; his life was threatened; in sheer despair he appealed from the inveterate fury of the priests to Cæsar, who swayed the imperial sceptre; and they were constrained, contrary to their will, to send Paul on a long, a weary, and a wintry voyage, to the great metropolis of the world.

Now, at first blush nothing could be more accidental. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes did not wish to send him to Rome: it seemed, too, when he left Judea, that he abandoned the congre-

gation where his ministry had been blessed, to go to a heathen one, where he had no reason to expect a blessing at all. But what was the result? Paul preached at Rome, first in his own hired house, to a few reckless Roman soldiers; but by-and-by, the shopmen on the streets, the tradesmen in the Forum, the orators in the courts—even they of Cæsar's palace, the high officers of state—came into contact with this eloquent but obscure and detested Christian Jew; and the result of that appeal from the persecution of the Scribe to the protection of Cæsar was, that the Gospel spread through every part of the metropolis of the world, and hundreds of thousands heard of Christ who never could have heard of him under any other circumstances. The effect and influence of this opportunity lay here:—a truth made known at Rome could never stop there. Rome at that day was the whispering-gallery of the wide world; a new light there radiated to Ultima Thule, and to the most distant parts of the globe; a new doctrine promulgated in the capital was sure to be heard of over all the provinces. Accordingly, we find from history that the actual result was, that this accidental persecution of Paul by the Jews, this accidental appeal to Cæsar for protection, this accidental escape from shipwreck, this accidental appearance in the midst of Rome, was the means of kindling a light that was not soon extinguished, and of circulating that Gospel which otherwise had been restricted to very narrow and puny limits.

What must be the inference from this? The Pharisee hated, the Apostle appealed, the winds wafted the ship; but the Lord reigned, and regulated, and ordered all.

Soon after this, a poor, obscure, and miserable man, descended of a broken-down family, reduced to beggary, came into public notice in Rome. His name is recorded in history as Constantine, the first Christian emperor. In one of his battles he saw, either in imagination or in reality, a cross of unearthly splendour blazing in the firmament; and he read on the cross, where the two pieces of wood were fastened together, ἐν τούτῳ νίκα—"In this overcome," or, "In this gain the victory." He embraced Christianity from this wonderful apocalypse—he proclaimed what formerly he persecuted—he forced it on his soldiers, a course that we cannot approve, but which was nevertheless followed by many practical and remarkable results; for the cross of Christ, the very synonyme of all that was detested, was emblazoned on the imperial Labarum; and the name of Jesus, no more the detested Nazarite, came to be the glory of princes and the light of the palaces of the greatest empire of the earth.

Soon after this we find a thousand years of dense and deplorable darkness lighted on broad Europe; and all the nations of the earth, notwithstanding the light that had burst from Palestine, were involved in a darkness so deep that it could almost be felt; and the only and the incidental lights in

the midst of it were the few and far between convents, that learning oftener than piety had constructed, to be the last retreats of the literature and the science of the world. The Church of Rome will say, "Then you make the admission that mediæval convents were the retreats of mediæval learning." I make the admission; but the fact that they were the retreats of learning is a proof that learning must have been previously persecuted. Why need a retreat, if she had not an oppressor? And who were the great persecutors of learning? Just the Popes of Rome; and for a person to put out the sun, if he had the power, and in the darkness that follows light a few gas-lamps, and then coolly tell us that we are indebted to him for the only light we have, is only an ingenious way of disguising and concealing the first great crime that was perpetrated. For the same Rome that kindled the few lights in the convents had previously put out the Sun of Righteousness shining from the firmament upon the world. During this black night, so dark and so disastrous that it seemed as if God did not reign, we shall yet find, in the midst of the darkness permitted as a penalty, lights breaking out, still revealing the truth, "The Lord reigneth." In the course of that dark era, the Mahometan brought into Europe lights that the Romanist, to his deep shame, almost, if not altogether, had quenched. Constantinople fell — the Greek literati in that capital were scattered throughout Europe — Greek learning came to be

studied — the Romish Church had almost lost the knowledge of the Greek language; and some of its most distinguished literati said, in the Universities of Europe, that every man that would learn Hebrew would become a Jew, and that every man that learned Greek was sure to become a Greek schismatic; obstructing the very knowledge that brought men to the very fountain of light and life — God's holy work. But these Greek literati brought their own stores with them into Europe: by-and-by, printing was discovered — then the mariner's compass — by-and-by, the feudal system, with its iron and yet petty tyranny, was broken up. And all these things were not human accidents, or merely secular things: the mariner's compass is a sacred thing — printing is a sacred thing; and we are as much indebted to God for printing and for the mariner's compass as we are for the Word of God itself. I cannot admit that so much man is to have the glory of, and that so much God is to have the glory of. These are sacred, and not profane things. They may be perverted by a profane hand to evil, but they may also be consecrated by the blessing of God to the accomplishment of the highest good. And the result of all this was, that light streamed from Constantinople to Rome; the benighted nations of the earth emerged into a new and unexpected twilight; and, in the course of a few years more, Erasmus, with his satire — Melancthon, the accomplished scholar, and the friend and assistant of Luther —

and ultimately Martin Luther himself — helped to scatter, by God's blessing, the darkness that enveloped the earth, and to strike out that light which has shone in deepening glory for the three centuries that have passed away. If we study the biography of Luther, that most remarkable man, we shall find that God reigns in the biography of individuals as well as in the annals and chapters of the history of mankind. He was one day begging bread upon the street: he heard an awakened Protestant denounce the corruptions of the Papacy; that first called his mind to the subject. Another day he was reduced to starvation; he was singing upon the streets of one of the cities of Germany for a morsel of bread. The pious and affectionate wife of Conrad Cotta gave poor Luther accidentally, as the world would say, a meal. She was so pleased with the open, frank, and amiable boy, that she took him to her house, became his patroness, put him to a good school. That was not chance; there was God there just as anywhere else; and if Luther had not heard that man denouncing Romanism — if Conrad Cotta's wife had not given that poor starved and begging lad a meal—in all probability the whole current of European history had been reversed. In the library of the College where he was placed, he discovered for the first time a complete Bible; and opening that blessed book, he detected in it a portrait of himself by nature, and a portrait of what he might be made by grace. His whole mind is startled — his heart

is stirred to its very depths; he feels himself—what grace always strikes deepest when it teaches—a poor, miserable, and guilty sinner. In his great distress, he flies to Staupitz, the vicar-general of the convent: he tells him, "Oh! I have learned that I am a poor, miserable sinner; I find that I never can be justified by deeds of law; I cannot see how I can possibly ever get to heaven. Oh," he said, "I am such a poor, such a guilty, such a miserable sinner!" And Staupitz said, "Luther, it is well that you feel so; it is for sinners that there is a Saviour. If you be only a make-believe sinner, then there is nothing but a make-believe Saviour for you; but if you be indeed a poor, miserable sinner, to save such sinners as you the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world." And Luther got peace from that vicar-general—peace in Christ and through the blood of the Cross; and went forth on his majestic mission, translated the Scriptures into the tongue of his fatherland, preached in every street and city in Germany, awakened dead nations, feared not the voice of clay, awoke that light which shines in our own land, startled the sleeping echoes of a thousand years; and the Vatican and the Inquisition have not ceased till now to re-echo the last accents that Martin Luther wakened first upon the streets of Wittenberg. Was not that proof that the Lord reigns? Is there not evidence there of God overruling and governing all to his glory, and to the good of his people?

Not very many years after that, an effort was made to crush the religion and to extinguish the light that Luther had kindled. Philip the Second (personated in his servant the Duke of Alva) waged the wars, the fierce and exterminating wars, in the Low Country. These were efforts to exterminate Protestant Christianity: but by the overruling providence of Him that reigned in Holland, and saw and watched the efforts of his foes, these were overruled to the establishment of Protestantism in Holland; and at this moment Holland is one of the most Protestant nations of the world; and when the Pope, the other year, attempted to favour Holland with the same presence with which he honoured us, in 1850, the Dutch rose as one man, backed and sustained by their most eminent statesmen, repelled the insolent aggression with a magnanimity and national force which we even might have imitated with advantage.

Soon after this the same cruel and sanguinary prince resolved to extinguish that land (our own), rising every day to be the reflector of the truth over all the ends of the earth. We find that he arranged for the destruction of England — under the behind-the-scene teaching of the Popes and the Jesuits of Rome — a powerful and, as he thought, irresistible Armada, armed with all sorts of engines of torture, in order to extinguish the light of Protestantism in England, and crush for ever the heretics by which that land was stained. And in order that the enterprise might have success, the Pope

that day most piously blessed it; and in order to facilitate the action of the invading force of superstition, he deposed Queen Elizabeth from her throne, released her subjects from their allegiance, and taught them and told them that they might murder her — not murder, for that was not his phrase—but that they might kill her; and instead of subjects rising against their Queen, it would only be holy people doing God and his Church holy and efficient service. All seemed to be hopeless as far as human sagacity could foresee; but Philip the Second, and the Pope, and their myrmidons, forgot the text, "The Lord reigneth." The Armada, we are told, after being shattered by tempests, and losing its admiral, approached our shores in the shape of a magnificent crescent, extending, from end to end, over a space of about seven miles. Our ships were few, but our hearts were brave; our cause, like our present one, was holy, righteous, and just. And what was the result? Not one shattered wreck of that formidable Armada returned to its own shores to tell the story of its disaster; not a timber of it was left afloat; and Queen Elizabeth, in a spirit worthy of the Protestant Queen of a Protestant realm, had medallions or medals struck that day by her own royal order; and upon those medals were written the words, *Deus flavit et dissipantur*, "God breathed upon them and they are scattered to the winds of heaven;" giving God the glory, acknowledging that

victory was not by might nor by power. "The Lord reigneth."

Now in all these instances — and they might be multiplied, from the history of our country, down to the present moment — we must see how true it is, "The Lord reigneth." And so we might come down to more recent years: what endless proofs of his presence, what tokens of his love, what a ceaseless comment has been the history of our nation for the last hundred years, illuminating with irresistible splendour the simple but sublime aphorism of the Psalmist, "The Lord reigneth!" And if we were to turn now from home to foreign lands, and notice the progress of the Gospel abroad, we should see how there, ever since 1793 — when the angel of the everlasting Gospel emerged from the chaos of the French Revolution, and the various missionary societies started on their beneficent fields — there has been proof in every part of the globe that the Lord is reigning. For a long time India was inaccessible to the truth; and some of the ancient potentates of that land believed that if the Gospel were admitted into Hindostan, our supremacy and sovereignty in India would be shattered. But the result by this time — under the presidency of Lord Dalhousie, an elder of the Church of Scotland, and one of the most Christian and devoted Governors that India ever had — is that Christianity, as it is spread among the Hindoos, instead of detaching them from our sovereignty and our sceptre, only attaches them to our fatherland the more.

And we have found that ever since the permission was given to missionaries of the Gospel to visit that land, the Gospel has sometimes slowly, but always steadily, made progress from the Ganges to its utmost bounds. The excellent and pious Dr. Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, writing home a short time ago, says: "A few years since everything was jungle; now everything is teeming in this district with Christian civilization." And if we refer to China, what an evidence there of the presence of God! In one moment the impregnable walls have fallen; in a day a nation has started to its feet. Do not believe some of the newspapers upon that subject. I am told by the most competent authority, that the Jesuits are trying to blacken the infant and imperfect Christianity of those that are denounced at present as the rebels, but who are likely soon to constitute the reigning dynasty of China. I am informed by those that have the means of knowing well, that through some mysterious teaching, in all probability, the first breath of the last Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, not hundreds, not thousands, not hundreds of thousands, but probably millions, have come at once to know that Christ is the only Saviour, that the New Testament is the book of God; and to insist upon, and practise, and develop, a morality so pure that it shames the Papal, and even some sections of the Protestant nations of the world. And again, if we look at other parts of the globe, we shall see the same blessed results. There is hope at last for all

but hopeless Africa. That country has been thought to be utterly impregnable to Christian effort. Our steamers have navigated its streams, and their crews have died in succession; the malaria or miasma on the banks of the great rivers, seemed to tell us that foreigners or Europeans never can penetrate into Africa, and promote the Gospel on anything like a great and a rapid scale. But singular enough, what seemed a curse, and what had become the shame and disgrace of a powerful republic in the West — I mean the slave trade — is being overruled, by the mysterious arrangements of Him who reigns, for the evangelization of that land which seemed to be all but hopeless, and to defy every effort that we made to reach it. By means of Christian missionaries, the slaves in America are becoming Christians; and the most hard-hearted slave-holders of the South cannot, and the most enlightened do not, prevent faithful missionaries and ministers preaching to the slaves the glad tidings of eternal life. These slaves, Africans in their origin, never forgetting their home, are seized at intervals with an irresistible instinct to go to the land of their fathers. A number of them have gone to Liberia; vast numbers of them are returning every year; and it is found that they are carrying with them the glorious Gospel; and in a climate where their constitution feels perfectly at home they are becoming the successful preachers of that Gospel which we have not been honoured to carry into the midst of their dark,

and barbarous, and benighted land. Can we doubt that the Lord reigns, when out of evil he thus educes good? Can we doubt that the Lord reigns, when he is thus opening up a free course for the circulation of his Word and the spread of his glorious Gospel by means and instrumentalities as striking as they are unpredecented in history before.

In Turkey in Europe there are at this moment about three millions of Mahometans, and there are nine millions of professing Christians — I wish I could say more—but professing Christians. Anybody can see that such a state of things as that cannot very long continue. We find now that in Turkey the Armenian Christians — an ancient Church that traces its descent to Ararat, and that holds Ararat to be its great rallying centre to this day—have, by the instrumentality of missionaries, been brought to a vast extent, and in great numbers, to the knowledge of the everlasting Gospel. These American missionaries, writing home to their country, state that numbers of the Armenian bishops and priests, having access to the Bible, are becoming acquainted with the word of God: and in Turkey at this moment they are the chief agriculturists and merchants, and have the greatest influence in the land; and amongst them there is a growing spirit of inquiry. An American missionary, writing home to America, states, that a few years ago, "Very few of the Armenian Christians would venture to call upon me; I could hardly

hold a prayer-meeting amongst them without terror; but now they are gathered into churches, becoming fond of the truth, and I can hold prayer-meetings in the midst of them without the least inconvenience, persecution, or opposition." And so widely had the Gospel spread among these Armenian Christians, that the Patriarch, as if he had imbibed the spirit of the Pope, resolved to crush them, and besought the Sultan to interpose, and banish from the land those who, he said, were troubling the quiet and the repose of the Christian Churches. But the Sultan — with a liberality that does him infinite credit, and that contrasts splendidly with the bigotry and persecution of Pio Nono — told the Patriarch that no man, whatever was his creed, should suffer persecution for any creed under his sceptre: a sentiment that indicates what a change the paddle-wheel, the steamboat and the railway, and the locomotive and the printing-press, have operated already in Turkey.

There was scarcely a Protestant chapel in all Turkey in 1832; in 1854, there are between fifty and sixty places of Protestant worship. Turkey, we have seen, is in the very last gasp. One writes, only a very few years ago: "Turkey is in the agonies of dissolution, and will very soon be a corpse. There is no law, no safety, no security for property, in this unhappy country. Plague, pestilence, and famine, are rapidly depopulating it. It needs no prophecy to satisfy me that Mahometanism is now falling into ruins, and must very soon cease."

A Christian's oath, by a decision in the present year, is now received as an Osmanli's; at this moment, the Sheik-ul-Islam — their Archbishop of Canterbury, as you might call him — is deposed; the endowments of the mosques are confiscated; Mahometanism is giving up every peculiarity it had left, and thus proves that we are arrived at the sixth vial, when the great river Euphrates is dried up, and when the nations of the earth, from the East and the West, assemble together to wage the great and last conflict of God Almighty—that terrible conflict, the outlines of which we need not now trace. All those incidents that are startling the East, and reflected from the West, are proofs to them that run while they read, that "the Lord reigneth;" all these are proofs that he has not left this orb to orphanage, that he has not forsaken his church, nor forgotten the world that he made; but that, though we think all is confusion, all is really working together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his gracious purpose. If a person were to look at the machinery of a steamer — one wheel goes in one direction, another in the opposite; one piston moves one way, and the other piston moves the opposite—his inference would be, if he were an ignorant person, "This machinery can accomplish nothing; it is all at cross purposes." But if he will look at the vessel of which it forms a part, he will find she is proceeding on her course at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour across the pathless ocean;

and what seemed to him conflict, confusion, and chaos, is only evidence of the nobler and the completer order.

The same blessed truth is strikingly shown among God's ancient people: throughout all the world they are giving token that the breath of heaven is passing on the dry bones, and that they are very soon likely to be a great and a royal nation. They will first be restored to their land, that next in their land they will be made acquainted with the glorious Gospel. And it is so interesting to read the incidents that are turning up every day affecting that people, that one cannot but see the overruling hand of God in what is now taking place. At this very moment I learned from a friend — I will not say that I know it to be true — that there is a treaty with the Sultan, either proposed by him, or offered by a Jew whose name is synonymous with all the wealth at the disposal of the Cabinets of the world, that he will lend him a very large sum to carry on the war with Russia, on condition that he will give the Jews Palestine as a pledge to hold while that loan continues. What is this but man, under the presidency of God, already beginning to expedite the fulfilment of the prophecies of Scripture? Every Jew's heart beats to Jerusalem; even the most wretched and degraded "old-clothes" dealer on the streets will tell you, in his calmest moments, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my

mouth;" and the last desire of the dying Jew is to be buried in Jerusalem; and the poorest pilgrims of that race are wending their way, in increasing and deepening currents, that they may die with the last beams of the sun of Palestine playing upon their closing eyes. And looking at Jerusalem at this moment, there are more Jews than there have been for the last seventeen hundred years in it; at this moment, too, there is an awakening among the Jews, through the instrumentality of the Jewish Mission, instituted by the Church of England, where there is a bishop, hated by the Papists, but heartily welcomed by the inquiring Jew; and in that capital, illustrious by a thousand historic recollections, many a Jew is now looking upon Him whom his fathers crucified, and is mourning — nay, not mourning, but rejoicing — in the faith and the hopes of the glorious Gospel.

The Jewish question, we have seen, is at this moment almost the question of the age. It agitates every Cabinet, it perplexes every government. And why? I can understand how statesmen should be plagued with the application of Romanists, because they constitute a large and a powerful section of the community. But why should any Government perplex or tease itself about the admission of a handful of Jews, that disturb nobody? They are not regicides, they are not rebels; if you do not admit them to power, they will not trouble you. Why is it, then, that the statesmen of the nation are perplexed at this moment with the Jew-

ish question? The answer is, it is the first token of their approaching resurrection; it is the Jew's struggle in his heart, seeking a rest and a repose for the soles of his feet; but, like the dove that Noah sent forth from the ark, he will find, neither in parliament, nor congress, nor divan, a rest; and as soon as he has secured the place that he aimed at, he will only thirst the more for Jerusalem, and find his rest where his God has promised it shall be found—where the wings of the cherubim were once spread, and the glory once burned upon the altar, and the land once teemed with miracles, and all things attested the presence of the Lord, the God of hosts.

Can we then fail to see in this also another proof of the truth of the statement, "The Lord reigneth?" And very remarkable it is, the things that men design to do, God overrules to accomplish what man never meant to do. The alchymists toiled to discover the philosopher's stone; that was their object; but they were the means of making some of the most precious discoveries that have enriched civilization. Columbus crossed the ocean to find out a new route to the Indies; but his crossing the ocean for his own purpose was overruled to discover the great western continent, likely to be one of the greatest bulwarks of freedom, and of Protestant Christianity. Luther first rose to oppose the sale of indulgences, which he regarded as a gross abuse; but as he penetrated deeper, he found he must not only lop off branches,

but root out the whole system. Nations think they are accomplishing their own ends: they are really fulfilling the prophecies of God. The Autocrat thinks, in the course he is now pursuing, that he is about to add to the splendour of his crown, the increase and extent of his dominion, and get new additions to his powerful and his mighty empire; but in reality he is just going to do what the poorest Irish labourers are doing in the streets of London — making a high-road for God's great purposes to drive onwards to their accomplishment. He thinks, poor man, that he is the mighty mover of a world; he is but the humble street-paver in the hands of Him that reigns and rules over all the earth. And not the least of the purposes he is now getting ready to accomplish, though he knows it not, is to open a road for the Jews to march from their distant quarters in a more glorious exodus than that which came forth from Egypt; and not to pause in their eastern march until they are settled, all their tribes, in their own pleasant country, where the Lord shall return again unto Mount Zion, and the God of Jacob shine again before his ancients gloriously.

Thus man plans, God purposes; thus all things prove the statement we have tried to illustrate, not sought to prove, "The Lord reigneth." Let Christians trust, and not be afraid. Do not be alarmed when a leaf falls, as if the world were going to ruin. "Be still, and know that I am God." Christians, who have relatives exposed to peril,

trust and be not afraid. Your husband, your brother, your dear relatives, are safe upon the battle fields of the East as you are in your own home; for God is in the East as well as the distant West. Christians, be not afraid that God's purposes will fail. All things aid them, all things fulfil them; and what we now admit as an article of our Creed, with stammering lips, we shall one day celebrate as a joyous note in our everlasting song: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. The Lord reigneth, let the nations tremble."

THE END.

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